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Flooding swamps New Orleans; possible hurricane coming next

By CHEVEL JOHNSON and JANET McCONNAUGHEY

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A storm swamped New Orleans streets and paralyzed traffic Wednesday as concerns grew that even worse weather was on the way: a possible hurricane that could strike the Gulf Coast and raise the Mississippi River to the brim of the city's protective levees.

The storm was associated with an atmospheric disturbance in the Gulf that forecasters said was on track to strengthen into a hurricane by the weekend. The National Hurricane Center expected the system to become a tropical depression by Thursday morning, a tropical storm by Thursday night and a hurricane on Friday.

Lines of thunderstorms

ranged far out into the Gulf and battered New Orleans, where as much as 8 inches (18 centimeters) of rain fell over a three-hour period Wednesday morning, officials said.

Mississippi and Texas were also at risk of torrential rains. In New Orleans, streets turned into small, swift rivers that overturned garbage cans and picked up pieces of floating wood. Water was up to the doors of many cars. Other vehicles were abandoned. Kayakers paddled their way down some streets. Chandris Rethmeyer lost her car to the flood and had to wade through water about 4 feet (1.22 meters) deep to get to safety. She was on her way home after working an overnight shift when she got stuck behind an accident in an



underpass and the water started rising.

"I was going to sit in my car and let the storm pass," she said. "But I reached back to get my son's iPad and put my hand into a puddle of water."

Valerie R. Burton woke up Wednesday to what

looked like a lake outside her door.

"There was about 3 to 4 feet of water in the street, pouring onto the sidewalks and at my door. So I went to my neighbors to alert them and tell them to move their cars," she said.

Gov. John Bel Edwards

Associated Press

declared a state of emergency and said National Guard troops and high-water vehicles would be positioned all over the state in advance of more heavy rain.

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Facing calls for resignation, Acosta defends Epstein deal



Labor Secretary Alex Acosta calls on a reporter to ask a question during a news conference at the Department of Labor, Wednesday, July 10, 2019, in Washington.

By JILL COLVIN and RICHARD LARDNER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Trying to tamp down calls for his resignation, Labor Secretary Alex Acosta on

Associated Press

Wednesday defended his handling of a sex-trafficking case involving now-jailed financier Jeffrey Epstein, insisting he got the toughest deal he could at the time. In a nearly hour-long news

conference, Acosta retraced the steps that federal prosecutors took in the case when he was U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida a decade ago, insisting that "in our heart we were trying to do the right thing for these victims." He said prosecutors were working to avoid a more lenient arrangement that would have allowed Epstein to "walk free."

"We believe that we proceeded appropriately," he said, a contention challenged by critics who say Epstein's penalty was egregiously light.

The episode reignited this week when federal prosecutors in New York brought a new round of child sex-trafficking charges against the wealthy hedge fund

manager. And on Wednesday, a new accuser stepped forward to say Epstein raped her in his New York mansion when she was 15.

Jennifer Araoz, now 32, told "Today" she never went to police because she feared retribution from the well-connected Epstein. She now has filed court papers seeking from Epstein in preparation for suing him.

While the handling of the case arose during Acosta's confirmation hearings, it has come under fresh and intense scrutiny after the prosecutors in New York brought their charges on Monday, alleging Epstein abused dozens of underage girls in the early 2000s, paying them hundreds of dollars in cash for massages, then molesting them at his homes in Florida and New York. Epstein has pleaded not guilty to the charges; if convicted he could be imprisoned for the rest of his life.

Acosta's lawyerly presentation was an effort to push back against growing criticism of his work in a secret 2008 plea deal that let Epstein avoid federal prosecution on charges that he molested teenage girls. A West Palm Beach judge found this year that the deal had violated the Crime Victims' Rights Act because the victims were not informed or consulted. He was also out to persuade President Donald Trump to keep him on the job as Democratic presidential candidates and party leaders called for his ouster.

Acosta insisted his office did the best it could under the circumstances a decade ago. He said state authorities had planned to go after Epstein with charges that would have

resulted in no jail time until his office intervened and pressed for tougher consequences, a contention that is supported by the record. The alternative, he said, would have been for federal prosecutors to "roll the dice" and hope to win a conviction.

But Epstein only was given 13 months in a work-release program, which let him work out of the jail six days a week. Acosta said it was "entirely appropriate" to be outraged about that leniency, but he blamed that on Florida authorities. "Everything the victims have gone through in these cases is horrific," he said, while repeatedly refusing to apologize to them.

"I think it's important to stand up for the prosecutors" in his old office, he said. His account did not sit well with Barry Krischer, who was the Palm Beach County attorney during the case. Krischer, a Democrat, said Acosta "should not be allowed to rewrite history." Acosta's South Florida office had gotten to the point of drafting an indictment that could have sent Epstein to federal prison for life. But it was never filed, leading to Epstein's guilty plea to two state prostitution-related charges. In addition to the work-release jail sentence, Epstein was required to make payments to victims and register as a sex offender.

Krischer said the federal indictment was "abandoned after secret negotiations between Mr. Epstein's lawyers and Mr. Acosta." He added: "If Mr. Acosta was truly concerned with the State's case and felt he had to rescue the matter, he would have moved forward with the 53-page indictment that his own office drafted." □

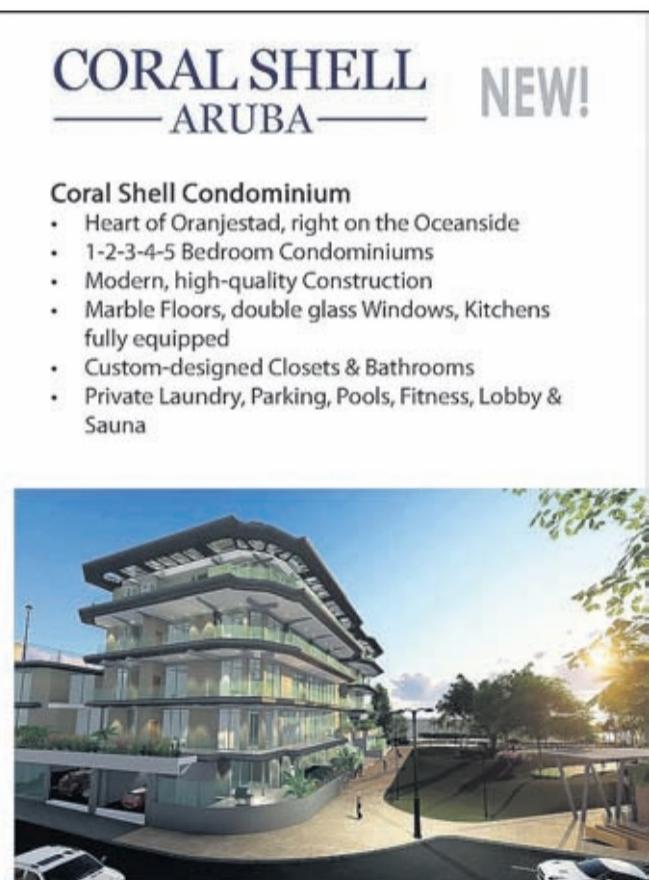
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Flooding swamps New Orleans; possible hurricane coming next

Continued from Front

"The entire coast of Louisiana is at play in this storm," Edwards said. Forecasters said Louisiana could see up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain by Monday, with isolated areas receiving as much as 18 inches (46 centimeters). The additional rain could push the already swollen Mississippi River precariously close to the tops of levees that protect New Orleans, officials said.

A spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers in New Orleans said the agency was not expecting widespread overtopping of the levees, but there are concerns for areas south of the city. The river was expected to rise to 20 feet (6 meters) by late Friday at a key gauge in New Orleans. The area is protected by levees 20 to 25 feet (6 to 7.6 meters) high, he said.

The Corps was working with local officials to identify any low-lying areas and reinforce them, he said. He cautioned that the situation may change as more information arrives.

"We're confident the levees themselves are in good shape. The big focus is height," spokesman Ricky Boyett said.

New Orleans officials have asked residents to keep at

least three days of supplies on hand and to keep their neighborhood storm drains clear so water can move quickly. As the water from Wednesday morning's storms receded, people worried about what might come next.

Tanya Gulliver-Garcia was trying to make her way home during the deluge. Flooded streets turned a 15-minute drive into an ordeal lasting more than two hours. She was supposed to head out of town for a weekend trip but now wonders whether the flights will take off.

"This is going to be a slow storm That's what I'm concerned about," she said.

Wednesday's flooding was reminiscent of floodwaters that surprised the city during an August 2017 rain. That flood exposed major problems at the agency overseeing street drainage. It led to personnel shake-ups at the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board and required major repair efforts.

On Wednesday, the board said 118 of 120 drainage pumps were operational and the agency was fully staffed. But the agency's director says that much rain in such a short time would have overwhelmed any drainage system. □



Motorists react in New Orleans react as the intersection at Franklin Ave. and 610 floods after a severe thunderstorm Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press



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Trump officials warn of 'active threats' to U.S. elections

By MATTHEW DALY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration outlined "active threats" to U.S. elections as it briefed Congress Wednesday on steps the government has taken to improve election security in the wake of Russian interference in 2016.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, FBI Director Christopher Wray and other officials "made it clear there are active threats and they're doing everything they can" to stop them, said Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Mich.

Dingell called the closed-door presentation "very impressive" and said the issue was "one we all need to take seriously."

Coats, Wray and other officials met separately with the House and Senate in classified briefings.

Democrats requested the sessions as they press legislation to keep Russia and other foreign adversaries from interfering with the U.S. political system.

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., called the meeting helpful and said it reinforced the importance of remaining vigilant against outside threats to U.S. elections.

The session demonstrated that federal agencies "continue to learn from the mistakes of the 2016 election, when the (Obama) administration was flat-footed in their response" to Russian interference, Scalise said.

Special counsel Robert Mueller laid out details of Russian interference in the 2016 election earlier this year, and lawmakers from both parties have warned that the Russians are likely to try to interfere again in 2020.

Democrats say Senate Ma-

jority Leader Mitch McConnell has blocked bipartisan bills to address election security, and they pressed for

While Congress may need to act, McConnell said he's skeptical of Democratic-passed bills on election se-

come of more elections," McConnell said Wednesday.

A bill approved by the

actors continue to meddle in our democratic systems, and we've been put on notice that previous efforts were only trial runs presumably for our next election in 2020," said Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., the chief sponsor of the House election security bill.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said the classified briefing was important but "by no means sufficient." Congress must "debate and adopt measures to protect our democracy and preserve the sanctity of elections," Schumer said. He accused McConnell of doing "nothing when it comes to one of the greatest threats to our democracy: that a foreign power would reach in and interfere (with U.S. elections) for its own purposes."

The bill approved by the House would require paper ballots in federal elections and authorize \$775 million in grants over the next two years to help states secure their voting systems. It also would prohibit voting systems from being connected to the internet or wireless technologies and tighten standards for private companies that provide election infrastructure. The bill is among several proposed by Democrats to boost election security as Congress belatedly moves to respond to Russian interference in the presidential election nearly three years ago. The GOP-led Senate is unlikely to vote on the bill.

"It's interesting that some of our colleagues across the aisle seem to have already made up their minds before we hear from the experts that a brand-new, sweeping Washington, D.C., intervention is just what the doctor ordered," McConnell said. □



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., right, listens as Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., left, speaks to reporters following the weekly policy luncheon on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, July 9, 2019.

Associated Press

the briefings as a way to force his hand.

McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, said he welcomed the briefings. The "smooth and secure execution" of the 2018 midterm elections "was not a coincidence" and showed the success of measures the administration has already taken, he said.

curity, saying they give too much control over state and local elections to the federal government.

Democrats "have twice passed bills aimed at centralizing election administration decisions in the federal government, in part on the hope that election attorneys — not voters — will get to determine the out-

House on a largely party-line vote in late June "would erode long-standing safeguards" that ensure local control of elections, he said.

Democrats dispute that and say urgent action is needed to guard against Russian interference in 2020. "We know that nefarious foreign and domestic

Woman says Jeffrey Epstein raped her when she was 15

By JIM MUSTIAN and JENIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A new accuser of Jeffrey Epstein said Wednesday that the wealthy financier raped her in his New York mansion when she was 15.

Jennifer Araoz filed court papers seeking information from Epstein in preparation for suing him, and she aired her allegations on NBC's "Today" show, though she said she hadn't discussed them with authorities.

The 32-year-old makeup artist told "Today" she never went to police because she feared retribution from the well-connected Epstein, who is now facing federal charges of abusing dozens of underage girls in New York and Florida in the early 2000s. He has pleaded not guilty.

"What hurts me even more so is that if I wasn't afraid to come forward sooner, then maybe he wouldn't have done it to other girls," Araoz said. "I feel really guilty to this day."

Messages were left with Epstein's attorneys and New York police seeking comment on Araoz's claims. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan declined to comment on them.

One of Araoz' attorneys, Daniel Kaiser, declined to comment Wednesday afternoon on whether he'd heard from authorities after Araoz went public with her accusation.

It came two days after Epstein, a 66-year-old Wall Street master of high finance with friends in very high places, pleaded not guilty to sex-trafficking and conspiracy charges. The indictment could land him behind bars for up to 45 years if he is convicted.

Epstein has not been charged with assaulting Araoz. But her account contradicts his defense attorneys' contention that Epstein never used violence or coerced anyone who gave him massages.

"She was a child — a child on welfare, with no father, who was groomed, recruited and preyed upon," said Kimberly Lerner, who rep-

resents Araoz with Kaiser. Araoz's father died when she was 12.

U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman said Monday that many of Epstein's alleged victims "were particularly vulnerable to exploitation," for reasons he declined to detail. He and other law enforcement officials repeatedly urged other potential victims and people with information about Epstein to come forward.

Araoz, in her court filing and TV interview, said her first contact with Epstein came in 2001, when she was a 14-year-old high school freshman at a performing arts high school, aspiring to become an actress. She said she was approached outside her school by a woman who told her that Epstein was a caring person who would help her with her career.

Araoz found Epstein welcoming, showing her his mansion filled with exotic taxidermy and elaborately painted ceilings, while his staff offered her wine and cheese, she said.

After a few weeks of visits, each ending with a \$300 payment, she said she was escorted to a "massage room," with a ceiling painted to resemble angels in a blue sky. There, she said, she would give him massages that would often lead to sex acts.

"I take care of you, you take care of me," Epstein told her, according to her court papers.

She said Epstein had a painting of a naked woman that he said resembled her; she also recalled prosthetic breasts he would play with while bathing.

"It was very odd," she said on "Today."

The visits continued once or twice a week until she turned 15, when she said Epstein told her to remove her underwear and climb on top of him.

She said she told him she didn't want to but that he forcibly had sex with her anyway.

"I don't want to say I was screaming, or anything of that nature. But I was terrified. And I was telling him

to stop," she said. "He had no intentions of stopping," she said. "He knew exactly what he was doing."

Araoz said she was "terrified" after the assault and never returned to Epstein's home. She even left her high school because it was so close to his mansion.

Epstein's staff continued trying to contact her for about a year, Araoz said, but she didn't respond.

A once-secret agreement allowed Epstein to avoid a potentially lengthy prison sentence nearly a decade ago in a case involving nearly identical allegations of sexually abusing underage girls.

Epstein pleaded guilty to lesser state charges and spent 13 months in jail. That plea deal was supposed to protect Epstein from federal prosecution, his lawyers



In this July 30, 2008 file photo, Jeffrey Epstein, center, appears in court in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

say. They argue the new federal charges should be dismissed.

They were brought by federal prosecutors in New York, who say the Florida

deal does not apply to them. They said the new charges overlap with the earlier case but include new allegations and victims from New York. □

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New holding center for migrant children opens in Texas

By NOMAAN MERCHANT

Associated Press

CARRIZO SPRINGS, Texas

(AP) — A former oilfield worker camp off a dirt road in rural Texas has become the U.S. government's newest holding center for detaining migrant children after they leave Border Patrol stations, where complaints of overcrowding and filthy conditions have sparked a worldwide outcry.

Inside the wire fence that encircles the site are soccer fields, a giant air-conditioned tent that serves as a dining hall, and trailers set up for use as classrooms and as places where children can call their families. The long trailers once used to house workers in two-bedroom suites have been converted into 12-person dorms, with two pairs of bunk beds in each bedroom and the living room. The Department of Health and Human Services said about 225 children are being held at the site in Carrizo Springs, with plans to expand to as many as 1,300, making it one of the biggest camps in the U.S. government system.

The government said the holding center will give it much-needed capacity to take in more children from the Border Patrol and prevent their detention in stations like the one in Clint, Texas, where lawyers last month reported some 250 youngsters were being held in cells with inadequate food, water and sanitation. Of the children held at Carrizo Springs, 21 had previously been detained at Clint, HHS spokesman Mark Weber said.

HHS said the Carrizo Springs location is a comfort-



In this Tuesday, July 9, 2019, photo, decorations cover the walls of the rooms of immigrants at the U.S. government's newest holding center for migrant children in Carrizo Springs, Texas.

Associated Press

able environment for children while they wait to be placed with family members or sponsors in the U.S. But immigrant advocates and others liken such places to child prison camps and worry that the isolated location 110 miles (180 kilometers) from San Antonio, the nearest major city, will make it more difficult to find lawyers to help the teenagers with their immigration cases.

Advocates have complained that HHS' largest holding centers — a facility in Homestead, Florida, a converted Walmart in Brownsville, Texas, and a now-closed tent camp at Tornillo, Texas — have traumatized children through overcrowding and inadequate staffing.

"All of this is part of a morally bankrupt system," said Rep. Joaquin Castro, a San Antonio Democrat.

There's also the huge cost:

an average of \$775 per day for each child. HHS plans to pay the nonprofit Baptist Child and Family Services up to \$300 million through January to run the Carrizo Springs site.

The government allowed The Associated Press to visit on Tuesday and distribute photos and video, though the AP could not show children's faces because of privacy restrictions.

Boys and girls are kept in separate buildings and follow separate schedules. They have decorated their rooms with drawings of superheroes and the flags of their home countries, including Guatemala and El Salvador. Many children smiled and greeted visitors as they walked by. Several girls knitted yarn hats and armbands.

A series of tents serves as the infirmary, with nurses on hand treating a few children for lice and flu-like

symptoms.

Breakfast is at 7 a.m., followed by soccer, then six hours of classes in reading, writing, social studies, science and math.

In reading class on Tuesday, the students were asked to practice reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in English. Many did so haltingly before the teachers called one student to the front to help lead them. After he finished, the whole class applauded.

HHS said the goal is to move the children through the holding center and others like it as quickly as possible. The department said it has sped up placing children with sponsors to an average of 45 days, down from 93 days last November. One key, HHS said, was lifting a requirement that all adult relatives be fingerprinted before they can take a child out of custody. "This facility is all about uni-

fication," said Weber, the HHS spokesman.

The holding center is opening amid record numbers of family members apprehended at the border and thousands of children traveling without their parents as they flee violence and poverty in Central America. Baptist Child and Family Services also ran the Tornillo camp, which opened last summer as thousands of children were separated from their parents by Trump administration policy. Tornillo reached as many as 2,800 children until it was closed in January.

BCFS CEO Kevin Dinnin said he had refused in December to take more children at Tornillo because the camp was holding them for so long, a decision that led to its closing. Dinnin said he resolved never to open another emergency center like it, but the conditions reported in Border Patrol custody changed his mind. He said he also believes HHS is doing more to process children more quickly.

"At the end of the day, our philosophy has been ... to keep kids out of CBP jail cells," Dinnin said.

Jonathan Ryan, executive director of the legal group RAICES, said his organization is ready to send lawyers to Carrizo Springs but is waiting for the OK from the government.

"We just want to get inside and work with those kids," Ryan said. "Children who have been detained, who have gone through deprivation and cages in Border Patrol custody, are potentially being released without ever having had access to legal advice and screening." □

NY expands pay equity law on day honoring U.S. soccer team

By DAVID KLEPPER

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) —

New York state expanded a state law Wednesday that prohibits gender pay discrimination, making it illegal to pay someone less based on characteristics including race, religion, disability or gender identity. Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the changes into law in Manhattan, just before joining the U.S. women's soccer team for a parade in New York City honoring their World Cup victory.

Members of the team have filed a lawsuit demanding pay equity with the men's soccer team, adding fuel to the broader debate over pay disparities that continue to affect millions of American workers.

The new law, which takes effect in 90 days, also changes a legal standard for pay equity to make it easier for employees to prove discrimination in

court.

"Every New Yorker deserves equal pay for equal work regardless of race, sexual orientation, disability, or however they choose to identify," said Democratic Sen. Alessandra Biaggi, who represents portions of Westchester County and the Bronx and sponsored the bill in the state Senate. It's already illegal in New York to pay women less than men for doing the same work, yet compensation for women continues to lag, with white women making 89 cents for every \$1 earned by men, according to state statistics. For black and Latina women, the gap is wider. They earn, respectively, 63 cents and 54 cents for every \$1 earned by men.

TIME'S UP, an organization that advocates for fairness and against sexual harassment in the workplace, hailed the new law and thanked the soccer players for "their extraordinary



Megan Rapinoe holds the Women's World Cup trophy as the U.S. women's soccer team is celebrated with a parade along the Canyon of Heroes, Wednesday, July 10, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

courage to play to win on the field, to fight for fairness in court, and to spark a new, global conversation about pay equity."

Cuomo also signed legislation barring employers from demanding prospective workers' salary histories. During a bill signing ceremony held just before Wednesday's parade, Cuomo said he supports the players' push for equal

treatment with the men's team, which failed to qualify for the 2018 men's World Cup.

Cuomo noted the women's victory and strong television ratings for their games could support an argument that the women deserve higher pay than the men.

"You cannot justify that the men get paid more, period," he said. □

Court reviews judge who told woman to 'close your legs'

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — A New Jersey judge who told a woman she could "close your legs" to prevent a sexual assault is "remorseful," his lawyer said.

Judge John Russo Jr. did not speak Tuesday during a disciplinary hearing before the state Supreme Court. But his lawyer, Amelia Carolla, told the justices Russo has "learned his lesson" and he "will not do this again."

Russo has previously said he was seeking more information and wasn't trying to humiliate the woman.

The woman appeared before Russo in 2016 seeking a restraining order against a man she said sexually assaulted her.

According to a transcript of the exchange, when the woman described her encounter with the man, Russo asked her, "Do you know how to stop somebody from having intercourse with you?"

When the woman answered affirmatively and said one method would be to run away, Russo continued, "Close your legs? Call the police? Did you do any of those things?"

He also made joking comments to staffers about the exchange after the woman had left the courtroom, according to a report issued by an ethics committee.

Russo was put on administrative leave in 2017 and reassigned to a different county court in December.

In April, the ethics committee called his conduct "discourteous and inappropriate" and recommended he be suspended for three months without pay,



In this Oct. 17, 2018 file photo, Superior Court Judge John F. Russo appears for his hearing before the Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct at Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, N.J.

Associated Press

though several dissenting members felt a six-month suspension would be more appropriate. The Supreme Court will issue a final determination.

The committee also concluded Russo violated rules of conduct on other occa-

sions, including when he ruled on an alimony case in which he acknowledged he knew both parties.

At Tuesday's hearing, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner questioned how a sex assault victim could have confidence in the judicial process if Russo remains on the bench.

"If the court were to decide that he could not preside over these sorts of sensitive matters, like the conduct here, how could he then serve anywhere in the system without the same types of concerns about public confidence in our judicial system arising?" Rabner asked. □

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UK ambassador to US quits after leaked cables enrage Trump

By DANICA KIRKA

JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's ambassador to the United States resigned Wednesday after being branded a fool and made a diplomatic nobody by President Donald Trump following the leak of the envoy's unflattering opinions about the U.S. administration.

Storm clouds gathered over the trans-Atlantic relationship as veteran diplomat Kim Darroch said he could no longer do his job in Washington after Trump cut off all contact with the representative of one of America's closest allies.

The break in relations followed a British newspaper's publication Sunday of leaked documents that revealed the ambassador's dim view of Trump's administration, which Darroch described as dysfunctional, inept and chaotic.

"The current situation is making it impossible for me to carry out my role as I would like," Darroch said in his resignation letter. He had been due to leave his post at the end of the year. In the leaked documents, he called the Trump administration's policy toward Iran "incoherent," said the president might be indebted to "dodgy Russians" and raised doubts about whether the White House "will ever look competent." "We don't really believe this administration is going to become substantially more normal; less dysfunctional; less unpredictable; less faction riven; less diplomatically clumsy and inept," one missive said.

Prime Minister Theresa May



In this Friday, Oct. 20, 2017, file photo, British Ambassador Kim Darroch hosts a National Economists Club event at the British Embassy in Washington.

and other British politicians praised Darroch, condemned the leak — and criticized Trump's intemperate comments, if only implicitly. Pointedly, however, Boris Johnson, considered the front-runner to replace May as prime minister, did not defend the ambassador after Trump's tirade. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, Johnson's rival for the post, said Wednesday it was "absolutely essential that when our diplomats do their job all over the world ... we defend them." "We had a fine diplomat who was just doing what he should have been doing — giving a frank assessment, a personal assessment of the political situation in the country that he was posted (to) — and that's why I defended him," he told reporters. "And I think we all should."

Speaking at a conference on media freedom, Hunt

also criticized Trump's verbal attacks on journalists.

"I wouldn't use the language President Trump used, and I wouldn't agree with it," he said. "We have to remember that what we say can have an impact in other countries where they can't take press freedom for granted."

Darroch announced his decision the morning after a televised Conservative leadership debate between Hunt and Johnson. During the debate, Hunt vowed to keep Darroch in the post, but Johnson — his predecessor as foreign secretary — notably did not support the British envoy.

"I think it's very important we should have a close partnership, a close friendship with the United States," said Johnson, whom Trump has praised in the past.

Emily Thornberry, the spokeswoman on foreign affairs for the main opposi-

tion Labour Party, said Darroch "has been bullied out of his job, because of Donald Trump's tantrums and Boris Johnson's pathetic lick-spittle response."

Darroch's forthright, unfiltered views on the U.S. administration — meant for a limited audience and discreet review — appeared in the leaked documents published by Britain's Mail on Sunday newspaper.

Darroch had served as Britain's envoy to Washington since 2016; the leaked cables covered a period from 2017 to recent weeks.

British officials are hunting for the culprit behind the leak, which was both an embarrassment to May's government and a major breach of diplomatic security. "We will pursue the culprit with all the means at our disposal," Foreign Office chief Simon McDonald told a committee of lawmakers, adding that police

Associated Press

were involved in the investigation.

McDonald said it was "vitally important" that ambassadors were able to speak candidly in private and that it was the first time in his 37-year career that a head of state had refused to work with a British ambassador. But he said the trans-Atlantic relationship was "so deep and so wide that it will withstand any individual squall." He also said he feared there might be more leaks of sensitive government documents.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement that "the United States and the United Kingdom share a bond that is bigger than any individual, and we look forward to continuing that partnership. We remain committed to the U.S.-UK Special Relationship and our shared global agenda."

Like his predecessors, Darroch was a prominent figure in Washington, meeting frequently with high-level U.S. officials and hosting parties at the stately British Embassy. Gatherings were frequently bipartisan, drawing guests from the Trump and Obama administrations, who mingled with journalists and members of prominent think tanks.

Darroch often addressed the attendees at such gatherings, making sure to single out high-level administration officials.

Trump's tweets created a furor among many British politicians and officials, who found themselves insulted by the president's decision to have the administration cut off contact with their ambassador. □



Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa smiles and looks at opposition lawmakers while delivering his speech opening the annual State of the Nation debate at the parliament in Lisbon, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

Portugal's Socialists eye re-election on economic record

Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Portugal's Socialist prime minister is vowing to address the challenges of a low national birth rate, the increasing cost of health care and climate change as he bids for a second straight term in the country's Oct. 6 general election.

Prime Minister Antonio Costa used his annual State of the Nation speech in parliament Wednesday to laud his government's record of economic growth, with the budget deficit of 0.5% the lowest in more than 40 years.

Portugal needed a 78 billion-euro (\$88 billion) bailout in 2011, after recording a deficit above 11%, and plunged into a three-year recession.

Costa's center-left Socialist Party, ruling as a minority government for the past four years, holds a comfortable lead in polls.

Critics say public services are starved for cash under the Socialists. □



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German leader Merkel seen shaking for 3rd time in a month

By GEIR MOULSON

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German Chancellor Angela Merkel's body shook visibly at a public event for the third time in less than a month on Wednesday, but the longtime leader insisted that there's nothing to worry about.

Merkel shook as she stood at a military honors ceremony alongside Finnish Prime Minister Antti Rinne outside the chancellery in Berlin, listening to the two countries' national anthems.

It followed similar episodes on June 18 and June 27. As in both those cases, the incident started as she stood still without talking, and the 64-year-old recovered quickly as she started walking.

The first incident happened in near-identical circumstances as she stood alongside Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy at a military honors ceremony. The weather that day was hot, and Merkel said afterward that she was fine after drinking three glasses of water.

The second incident happened at the German president's palace as she listened to his comments



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister of Finland Antti Rinne listen to the national anthems at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

on the swearing-in of a new justice minister. Temperatures were much cooler that day, as they were on Wednesday.

Merkel, who has been German leader since 2005, turns 65 on July 17. She suggested that the psychological impact of the first incident was responsible for the subsequent episodes.

"I am fine," she told reporters after her meeting with Rinne. "I said recently that I am in a phase of process-

ing the last military honors with President Zelenskiy. That is clearly not entirely complete, but there is progress."

"I will have to live with it for a while now, but I am very well and people don't have to be worried," she added.

Public figures' health is generally regarded as a private matter in Germany and the country's privacy laws are very strict on that type of information. It is not

publicly known if Merkel has any health problems.

The chancellor has a reputation for stamina garnered in years of late-night domestic and European negotiating marathons. She has rarely had to cut back her work schedule significantly, though she did so for a few weeks in 2014 when she cracked her pelvis while cross-country skiing in Switzerland during a winter vacation.

Merkel demurred when

asked at Wednesday's news conference whether, given recent concern about her health, she should now take a more head-on approach to the issue.

"My comments on this are done today, and I think my statement that I am fine can find acceptance," she said. "I said that I have to process this event and that I am in this process, and I think that just as it came, it will go away one day."

"I am very firmly convinced that I am entirely capable of performing," she added. A spokeswoman for Merkel, Ulrike Demmer, declined to comment on whether there had been any other shaking episodes beyond the three publicly known ones.

Merkel said last year that she won't seek a fifth term as chancellor and won't seek any other political job after her current term ends in 2021.

She gave up the leadership of her center-right party after a pair of poor state election performances that followed a rocky start to her fourth-term government. She has shown no sign since of wanting to give up the chancellorship before her term is up. □

EU political groups won't back nominee before vote

By RAF CASERT

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The nominee for president of the European Union's executive arm said Wednesday she would put respect for the rule of law and a progressive climate policy at the heart of her program if she is approved for the position. German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen was

grilled by EU legislators from the socialist, green and free-market liberal groups in the EU parliament, which expects to vote on whether to confirm her as European Commission president next week.

Von der Leyen was the surprise last-minute compromise candidate nominated by the leaders of EU member nations last week to re-

place Jean-Claude Juncker. While she is expected to be backed by the major political groups in the European Parliament, there has been stinging criticism of the way she was put forward as a candidate.

"I know it was a bumpy start we had together," von der Leyen told legislators from the Renew Europe liberal group on Wednesday. □



German Defense Minister and candidate for European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, center, is escorted by security guards and her assistants between meetings at the European Parliament in Brussels, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

Lebanon leaders condemn US sanctions on Hezbollah lawmakers

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's president and parliament speaker decried on Wednesday new U.S. sanctions targeting two Hezbollah lawmakers, as the prime minister sought to reassure the public the fragile economy won't be affected. The country's top leaders were reacting a day after the U.S. Treasury Department said it is targeting two Hezbollah lawmakers and a security official suspected of using their positions to further the aims of the Iran-backed group as well as bolster Tehran's "malign activities."

The new sanctions were the first time Washington targeted lawmakers currently seated in Lebanon's parliament — a jab at the militant group's growing political role which seemed to have struck a nerve at a time when the country is dealing with a major economic slump.

The widening dragnet also comes as the U.S. increases its pressure on Tehran, levying new sanctions on Iran and raising tensions across the region.

Hezbollah has been under increasing financial



This combination of three photo shows, from left, Wafiq Safa, a top Hezbollah security official, and Lebanon Parliament members Muhammad Hasan Ra'd and Amin Sherri in Beirut.

Associated Press

sanctions from the United States. But Treasury officials said the latest designation, naming lawmakers Mohammad Raad who leads the group's parliamentary bloc and Amin Sherri, makes clear that there is no dividing line between Hezbollah's political and militant wings.

Lebanon's President Michel Aoun said the U.S. decision to target lawmakers was regrettable, adding that his government will pursue the matter with American officials.

Aoun said the decision contradicts previous U.S. positions vouching for the

commitment of Lebanon and its banking sector to international agreements combatting money laundering, funding terrorism and other criminal activities.

Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri called the sanctions an aggression against the whole country and against Lebanese democracy. He called on the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union to take the necessary measures to deal with "the irrational behavior." It is not clear what the union can do.

Both Berri and Aoun are Hezbollah allies.

The Western-backed Prime Minister Saad Hariri, one of Hezbollah's main local opponents, said the sanctions took a "new course" when they hit elected lawmakers but urged that the issue not be exaggerated to avoid aggravating already tense domestic relations.

"This will not affect parliament or the work that we do both in parliament and in the Council of Ministers," Hariri said during a function in Beirut. "It is important that we preserve the banking sector and the Lebanese economy, and God willing, this crisis will pass sooner or later."

Hezbollah and its allies won a majority in 2018 elections and the group has three Cabinet seats, the largest number it has ever controlled. The group, founded by Iran's Revolutionary Guard in the 1980s, is among the most effective armed groups in the region and has fought several wars with neighboring Israel. Lebanon is still technically at war with Israel.

Hezbollah has also sent thousands of its fighters to Syria to fight alongside the troops of President Bashar Assad. Lebanese groups are sharply divided over Hezbollah's growing regional clout but the local rivals have worked together to preserve a delicately balanced political system. The sectarian-based arrangement has survived flare ups over policy decisions following a 1989 political deal that capped 15 years of civil war.

"The most important thing that we must work on at present is to secure the needs of the Lebanese citizens and provide them with a good economic situation because they are fed up of political rhetoric and slogans," Hariri said. □

Ukraine: Chernobyl's radioactive dust shelter unveiled

Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Wednesday inaugurated a giant structure built to confine radioactive debris at the nuclear reactor that exploded in Chernobyl in 1986.

The confinement structure for the Chernobyl nuclear power plant's Reactor No. 4 cost 1.5 billion euros (almost \$1.7 billion) to build, and the entire project cost 2.2 billion euros (about \$2.5 billion).

The complex construction effort to secure the molten reactor's core and 200 tons of highly radioactive material took nine years to complete under the auspices of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Officials have described the shelter as the largest moveable land-based structure ever built,



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, foreground, visits the "new safe confinement" shelter that spans the remains of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant's Reactor No. 4, in Chernobyl, Ukraine, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

with a span of 257 meters (843 feet) and a total weight of over 36,000 metric tons (over 40,000 tons). Reactor No. 4 at the plant in what was then Soviet Ukraine exploded and burned on April 26, 1986,

spewing radioactive dust across Europe in the world's worst nuclear accident.

Thirty workers died either from the explosion or from acute radiation sickness within several months. About 600,000 people had

exposure to radiation at elevated levels while fighting the fire at the plant or working to clean up the contamination.

The accident exposed millions in the region to dangerous levels of radiation and forced a permanent evacuation of about 350,000 people from hundreds of towns and villages in Ukraine and Belarus.

The disaster's eventual death toll has been subject to speculation and dispute, but the World Health Organization's cancer research arm has estimated that 9,000 people were to die of exposure-related cancer and leukemia if Chernobyl disaster's health effects follow a similar pattern to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings.

The new confinement structure was designed to safeguard radioactive

debris and prevent further crumbling of the reactor.

A section of the machine hall collapsed in 2012.

To finance the containment structure, the EBRD managed a fund with contributions from 45 countries, the European Union and the bank's own resources. Ukraine contributed 100 million euros (about \$112 million).

Deputy project manager Victor Zalizetskyi, who has been part of construction and repairs at the Chernobyl plant since 1987, said he was "filled with pride" that he got to work on a job "that has such a big importance for all humankind." However, Zalizetskyi expressed concern in an interview last week that war-torn Ukraine might struggle to cover the maintenance costs for the reactor's new enclosure. □

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China's largesse in Tonga threatens future of Pacific nation

By NICK PERRY

Associated Press

NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga (AP) —

The days unfold at a leisurely pace in Tonga, a South Pacific archipelago with no traffic lights or fast-food chains, and where snuffling pigs roam dusty roads.

Yet even in this far-flung island kingdom, there are signs a battle for power and influence is heating up among much larger nations — and Tonga may end up paying the price.

Government officials work in a shiny new office block that was an \$11 million gift from China. Dozens of bureaucrats take all-expenses-paid training trips to Beijing each year. And China has laid out millions of dollars to bring Tongan athletes and coaches to a training camp in China's Sichuan province.

"The best facilities. The gym, the track, and a lot of equipment we don't have here in Tonga," said Tevita Fauonuku, the country's head athletic coach. "The accommodation: lovely, beautiful. And the meals. Not only that, but China gave each and everyone some money. A per diem." China also offered low-interest loans after pro-democracy rioters destroyed much of downtown Nuku'alofa in 2006, and analysts say those loans could prove Tonga's undoing. The country of 106,000 people owes about \$108 million to China's Export-Import bank, equivalent to about 25 percent of GDP. Teisina Fuko, a 69-year-old former parliament member, suspects China finds his



In this April 9, 2019, photo, China's ambassador to Tonga, Wang Baodong, waits to speak to The Associated Press at the embassy in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

country's location useful.

"I think Tonga is maybe a window to the Western side," he said. "Because it's easy to get here and look into New Zealand, Australia."

"It's a steppingstone."

For decades, the South Pacific was considered the somewhat sleepy, backyard of Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Now, as China exerts increasing influence, Western allies are responding.

After Cyclone Gita destroyed Tonga's historic Parliament House last year, the government first suggested China might like to pay to rebuild it. Then Australia and New Zealand stepped in and are now considering jointly funding the project. Experts say the South Pacific could be important to China's navy or coveted

for its fisheries, seabed minerals and natural resources.

China is also engaged in an ongoing effort to lure away the few remaining countries that recognize Taiwan instead of China — several of them Pacific island nations.

"It's not entirely clear what China wants in the South Pacific," said professor Rory Medcalf, the head of the National Security College at Australian National University. "It's just clear that China is becoming very active and making its presence felt."

China has poured about \$1.5 billion in aid and low-interest loans into the South Pacific since 2011, putting it behind only Australia, according to an analysis by Australian think-tank the Lowy Institute. And that figure rises to over \$6 billion

when future commitments are considered.

Some worry the loans could become debt traps when nations can't repay.

China's ambassador to Tonga, Wang Baodong, said China has only benevolent intentions in Tonga and no hidden agenda.

"Some people in the West are being over-sensitive and too suspicious," he said. "No need."

It's not just money that is flowing in from China. Chinese immigrants began arriving in the 1990s when Tonga started selling passports.

The idea was to attract wealthy Hong Kong residents hedging their bets ahead of the former British colony's return to China in 1997.

Instead, they were snapped up by rural Chinese looking

for a better life. In a country with few jobs, Tongans worry that Chinese immigrants are now running most of the corner groceries and are expanding their business interests into farming and construction.

Wang acknowledges the criticism that Chinese immigrants run many businesses but said Tonga's leaders recognize the contribution they make and have even called on Tongans to learn from their hard-work ethic. The real threat to Tonga's future may lie in its crippling loans from China.

Repayments were due to start last year, and panic crept in.

Last August, Prime Minister 'Akilisi Pohiva called on other Pacific nations to join forces to demand debt relief, warning that China could snatch away buildings and other assets. But he reversed his position days later, saying Tonga was "exceedingly grateful" for China's help. Tonga also said it was joining China's Belt and Road Initiative, the trillion-dollar investment-and-lending program that is a signature policy of President Xi Jinping.

Tongan officials don't seem eager to discuss the relationship with China, saying all questions about China's loans and aid should be directed to Chinese officials.

Wang said there was no link between Tonga getting a break on its loans and joining the Belt and Road Initiative. He said Tonga had raised concerns about the loan, and China was willing to help. □

Associated Press

Mexico's treasury secretary resigns, cites interference

By MARK STEVENSON

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's treasury secretary resigned Tuesday, complaining of the appointment of unqualified officials by "influential people in the current administration who have clear conflicts of interest."

Carlos Urzua, a longtime ally of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, did not specify who he meant. But his resignation letter suggested that ideology might be involved.

Urzua wrote that economic policy should be "free of extremism, whether that be right or left," but said "that belief was not reflected" by the administration. He also accused López Obrador of making policy decisions "without sufficient justification."

Urzua's resignation came at a sensitive time for López Obrador, who faces threats of tariffs from the United States and downgrades from credit rating agencies.

López Obrador said he had accepted Urzua's resignation, but did not respond to the accusations. He acknowledged Urzua had not agreed with some decisions, and noted: "We cannot continue with the same strategies. You cannot put new wine in old bottles."

The president appointed Assistant Treasury Secre-



This Dec. 14, 2017 photo shows Carlos Urzua during a press conference where he was presented as a cabinet member of presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico City.

Associated Press

tary Arturo Herrera to replace Urzua and said his job would be "to create wealth, in order to distribute wealth."

Herrera served as chief of finances for López Obrador when he was Mexico City mayor in the early 2000s and has also worked for the World Bank.

Herrera said he did not know what problems Urzua was referring to in his resignation letter. He pledged to continue with plans for primary government budget surpluses in all the remaining five years of the administration, and pledged to preserve macroeconomic

stability and confidence in financial markets.

Some observers speculated Urzua had been angered by Lopez Obrador's insistence on spending money on pet projects, like building a new oil refinery and renovating others. But Herrera said the bulk of new investments at the state-run oil company, Pemex, would be in exploration and production, to reverse falling oil output. "We will continue to support Pemex," he said.

Herrera also dismissed speculation that Mexico might be heading into a recession.

López Obrador has sought to appease the business community, but has also drawn criticism for pushing ahead on costly pet projects and canceling a partly built Mexico City airport. The president has gone on an unceasing austerity drive to reduce spending on government salaries, but has also created a series of new direct-grant cash payment programs for youth scholarships and training programs and has expanded payments for the elderly. He has also embarked on ambitious infrastructure projects like the Maya Train,

to connect tourist resorts and pre-Hispanic archaeological sites on the Yucatan Peninsula.

Alfredo Coutino, Latin America director at Moody's Analytics, said one of the big fears is that López Obrador's social programs and building projects could hurt the government's drive to avoid budget deficits.

"He has promoted the main infrastructure projects. The question is does he have the money to finance those projects or not," Coutino said. "Where's the money coming from for all these social programs? I think that one of the pressures that Carlos Urzua had was that we don't have money to finance all these social programs."

Coutino said Urzua had provided some confidence for investors, and his resignation roiled markets, with stocks dropping about 1.6 percent and the peso falling about 1.4%, to 19.16 per \$1.

"It's a big shock," he said. "The main question is this going to be just a transitory negative event, or is it going to be the beginning of pieces falling apart."

López Obrador has said that savings from the government's spending cuts and an anti-corruption campaign would pay for the projects, along with some private financing. □

Ex-education secretary, 5 others held in Puerto Rico probe

By MARIELA SANTOS

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Puerto Rico's former secretary of education and five other people were arrested Wednesday on charges of steering federal money to unqualified, politically connected contractors, federal officials said.

Federal officials said Wednesday morning that former Education Secretary Julia Keleher; former Puerto Rico Health Insurance Administration head Ángela Ávila-Marrero; businessmen Fernando Scherrer-Caillet and Alberto Velázquez-Piñol, and education contractors Glenda E. Ponce-



Federal agents escort former Puerto Rico Health Insurance Administration head Ángela Ávila-Marrero who was arrested in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

Mendoza and Mayra Ponce-Mendoza, who are sisters, were arrested by the

\$15.5 million in federal funding between 2017 and 2019.

Thirteen million was spent by the Department of Education during Keleher's time as secretary while \$2.5 million was spent by the insurance administration when Ávila was the director.

Officials said there was no evidence that Keleher or Ávila-Marrero had personally benefited from the scheme.

"U.S. Attorney for Puerto Rico Rosa Emilia Rodríguez said Velázquez Piñol had improperly taken advantage of contacts in the education and health insurance

agencies to win federal contracts and illegally used federal money to pay for lobbying.

"It was alleged that the defendants engaged in a public corruption campaign and profited at the expense of the Puerto Rican citizens and students. This type of corruption is particularly egregious because it not only victimizes tax payers, it victimizes those citizens and students that are in need of educational assistance," said Neil Sanchez, special agent in charge of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Inspector General's Southern Region. □



Our Newest Column is All about YOU giving Happiness

ORANJESTAD — Today is the launching for our newest column: Happy Community Initiative, published bi-weekly, every Thursday in Aruba Today. We will inform you about this dynamic, new project from different angles to give you a complete feel so follow us and keep engaged!



Left Sulaika Kelly, Director of Operations and right Peter van Grinsven, General Manager of Playa Linda Beach Resort

The Happy Community Initiative is a visitor charity program that you can help build Aruba's community strong by doing a donation to good causes. CEDE Aruba, a dynamic community foundation, and the Aruba Timeshare Association (Atsa) collaborates in this platform for visitors who would like to make a donation, but also volunteer in the future. The priority is set to support projects for Aruban youths. CEDE Aruba will make sure that the donations reach meaningful projects of local non-profits, based upon quality and transparent finances of the offered programs. In this manner, you can be assured that your donation will reach its goal! With your donation, you support Aruban children with after school programs, mentorship activities and social support.

Playa Linda Beach Resort is IN!

In the lobby of many hotels, you will soon find a Happy Community donation kiosk with banner where you can make your donation. The procedure is very simple and the amount you decide for yourself. If you prefer, you can also donate via the website: www.happycommunity.org. Every bit of help is welcome and provides a little bit of happiness to our non-profits and their youth participants.

Playa Linda Beach Resort's Director of Operations, Sulaika Kelly, explains that the resort was the first one to launch the project. "We are member of Atsa, and each one of the members signed up for participation in this Happy Community Initiative. Aside of that to Playa Linda, it is important to give back to the community and have a corporate responsibility to be able to invest in the educational part." Playa Linda's requirements to commit to a community project are, it carried out by a trustworthy and professional entity. "This is without doubt the case with CEDE, they even hired a coordinator for this initiative. Also, the marketing requirements they have grant confidence. It needs to be done well and with a constructive and long-term vision." CEDE has made a selection of foundations/organizations who will be executing the youth programs.

The Youth

"They are our future," says Kelly. "We can see there is a gap for youth development on Aruba as in extra curriculum activities, and providing these children with motivational programs. It is what is very much needed. We often lean to programs that show the immediate necessity but this program is a key for everything in the future." Part of these youngsters will also be needed in the hospitality industry in the future, so in a way supporting them is a circle that comes back to the visitor. Programs with a dynamic mix of creativity, sports, music and building resilience help them to know what they like, and empower their skills and talents. "It is just great that we have this opportunity now to actually make a difference in the lives of this generation," Kelly says.

Your Connection

The members and guests of Playa Linda

Beach Resort are always open to help local community according to Kelly. "They feel home here and wish to be connected with the locals. This Happy Community Initiative makes that possible for them and best thing is that the procedure is so quick and easy. The kiosk is a piece of cake as you push three times, and swipe and you are done." You will find the kiosk in the Member's Lounge, but soon it will be moved to the lobby.

Some Facts

Millions of people around the world love Aruba, the ONE HAPPY ISLAND and the home away from home! Tourism in Aruba is performing well. However, in Aruba, about 6 of 10 youngsters between the ages of 12 and 18 are alone or without adult supervision after school time. In most cases, it is because their parents are working. In addition to this, many of Aruba's youngsters do not travel often and experience boredom from a lack of activities during school vacations. Furthermore, 4 out of 10 Aruban youngsters do not finish secondary school. This is a very big issue for Aruba's future economy and the tourism industry. A recent study found; At least 60% of Aruba's youth is asking for afterschool programs, aiming at sports, cooking, art programs and a safe place to hang out with their friends.

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Your donation will help us to start and support after school programs with a focus on time for homework and diverse, meaningful activities. Also, your donation will support mentorship activities during school vacation, and support projects aiming at youth at risk. Last but not least, your donation will support projects that reduce the amounts of school dropouts, create new opportunities for youngsters to integrate back in education, and to find a career. At this moment the following resorts have a donation kiosk: Paradise Beach Villas; Costa Linda Beach Resort; La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino; and Playa Linda Beach Resort.

You can also donate on the website: <https://happycommunityaruba.org/donate>.

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Movie night at the National Library of Aruba

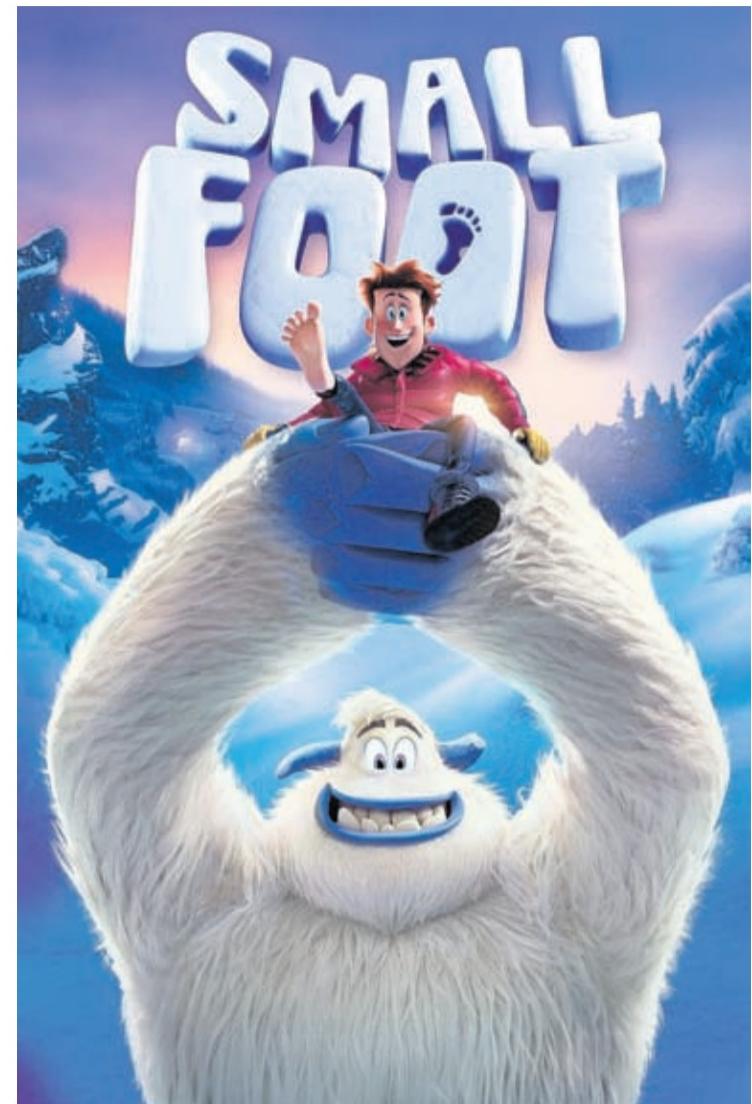
ORANJESTAD — The National Library of Aruba would like to invite you their weekly open air movie night at their location in San Nicolas and Oranjestad starting at 7PM.

During the month of July the National Library of Aruba will be holding an open air movie night. Every week a new movie will be showed. This will take place every

Wednesday at library in San Nicolas & every Thursday at the library in Oranjestad staring at 7PM. The movies that will be featured are 'Small Foot', 'How to train your dragon', 'Wonderpark' and 'Dumbo'.

About the movie

This week's movie is 'Small Foot'. Migo is a friendly Yeti whose world gets turned upside down when he discovers something



that he didn't know existed -- a human. He soon faces banishment from his snowy home when the rest of the villagers refuse to believe his fantastic tale. Hoping to prove them wrong, Migo embarks on an epic journey to find the mysterious creature that can put him back in good graces with his simple community.

Come and enjoy some great family time and the best of it, entrance is completely free!!.□

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Honoring of a loyal visitor at Playa Linda Beach Resort

EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Mарouska Heyliger had the great pleasure to honor a Loyal and friendly visitor of Aruba as Distinguished Visitor at their home away from home. The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between 10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

Linda C. Smith from Pennsylvania , was recently honored as Distinguished Visitors due to her 13th consecutive visit to Aruba. Ms. Smith stated that she loves coming to the island to reunite with friends, for its beautiful sunsets and the safe environment.

Heyliger together with representatives of the Playa Linda beach Resort Aruba presented the certificate to the honoree, and handed over some additional presents, thanking her for choosing Aruba as her vacation destination and as her home away from home for so many years. □



The Greatness of Golf



NOORD — The ONLY 18-hole golf course on this island is at Tierra del Sol. The uniqueness is the reason to visit it, yes, but added to that is an overwhelming nature and outstanding service. There is no way you can miss out on this experience. Imagine: a drive to the North end of the island where you encounter the island's rugged north coast and Blue Ocean forming your panoramic from a masterfully sculpted 18 beautiful holes of championship golf by Robert Trent Jones II. Your play field combines the elements of wind, sea, and earth in perfect harmony. You may even encounter goats and the local burrows names 'shocos'. Let us show you around.

Tierra del Sol Golf is all about respecting nature and indulging in the calmness of the sea, the challenges of the wind and the bravery of the rugged coastline. You will feel inspired by this landscape that could easily function as an impressionist's painting. Four sets of tees per hole provide a variety of approach angles and challenge. The Par View GPS yardage system offers a virtual view of the field to help vacationing "pros" with their shots. It also allows for electronic scoring, including leader board and track skins for groups. The facility also features a full-length practice range, putting greens and chipping areas. Golf Digest described the course as playing Scotland, Arizona, and the Caribbean all at once. Whether you are a novice or avid golfer, you will find the sensation of golf here truly exhilarating.

Animals on Course

Golf Lovers are Nature Lovers. Walking greens, enjoying quietness, absorbing surroundings and focus on your game all comes along with the art of golf. Now Tierra del Sol Golf has an unique add-on as here you are on the housing grounds of the protected local burrow, in local language called 'shoco'. Priority of Tierra del Sol is to protect the birds and their nests making it a strong possibility for you as golfer to bump into one. A nesting site consists of a pair of burrows. Shocos



**Tierra del Sol
Aruba**

are running out of areas where they can nest. They often end up using piles of construction sand on development areas which collapse due to human activities, killing the offspring. Aruba's burrowing owl is a critically endangered endemic subspecies and was declared a national symbol of Aruba in 2012. Another local beauty you

are likely to meet is the Aruban goat. Welcome to nature, welcome to the greatness of golf.

After Game Delight

Tierra del Sol's restaurant, either from the poolside outdoor terrace or from the elegant indoor restaurant, is a heavenly after-game delight. The offering: From breakfast to dinner excellent cuisine, friendly service, and a gorgeous setting. Testimonials

"Awesome golf course. Had a blast!!"

"Wonderful golf and you will see goats on the course. You may be fortunate and see Shoco owls. Just know it will be very very windy. □"



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SPORTS



**Surging
rookie
Wolff
headlines
John Deere
Classic field**

By LUKE MEREDITH
AP Sports Writer

Matthew Wolff made a name for himself by winning the 3M Open in his fourth PGA Tour start after turning pro.

The 20-year-old who starred at Oklahoma State will try to make it two in a row this weekend at the John Deere Classic in Silvis, Illinois.

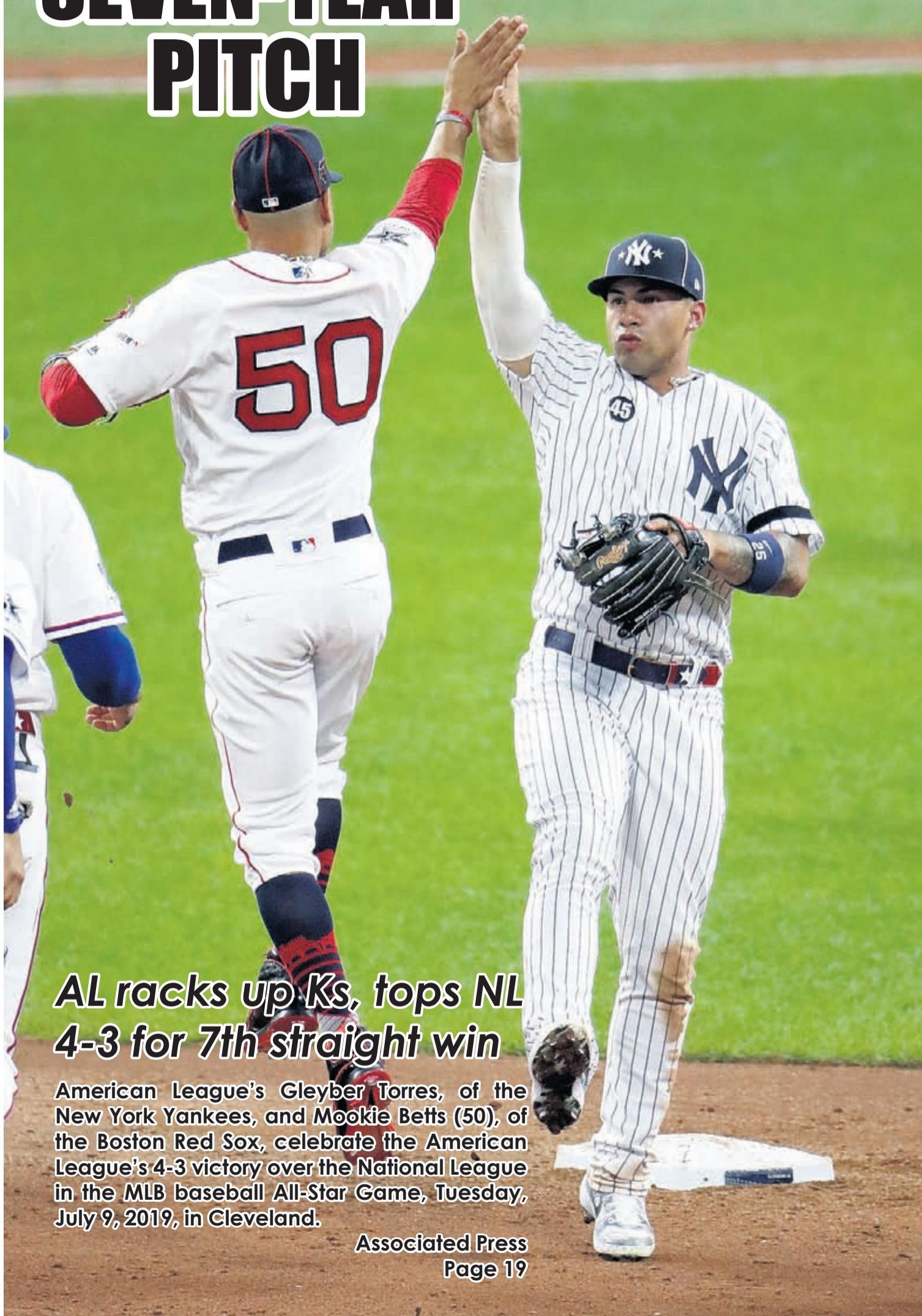
Wolff was the tour's youngest winner since Jordan Spieth won at TPC Deere Run at age 19 in 2013. And like Spieth, he's being hyped as a future star as he arrives in the Quad Cities.

Many of the world's best players are either taking the week off or playing the Scottish Open in preparation for next week's British Open. That makes Wolff as good a bet as any to make a run at the title at a venue known for low scores.

"My caddie kind of told me that this course is a little bit like last week, just the driving aspect and kind of the way it sets up," Wolff said. "I played it for the Monday pro-am, and I kind of realized that it was more of a course that suited my eye pretty well and I like the look of it."

Wolff's victory last week at TPC Twin Cities took care of a lot: It earned him instant membership and a two-year exemption on the PGA Tour and invitations to next year's Masters and PGA Championship. But it didn't get him a spot in the field at the British Open.

SEVEN-YEAR PITCH



Continued on Page 23

Trade deadline looms as baseball resumes after break

By JAY COHEN

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Francisco

Lindor and the Cleveland Indians, looking up at Nelson Cruz and the surprising Minnesota Twins. Matt Chapman and the Oakland Athletics, trying to run down José Altuve and the Houston Astros. Max Scherzer and the Washington Nationals, chasing Ronald Acuña Jr. and the Atlanta Braves. Baseball ramps up again this weekend, and a handful of contenders have a lot of work to do.

Five of the majors' six divisions feature deficits of at least 5½ games as play resumes after the All-Star Game, in which the American League beat the National League 4-3 Tuesday night. Life is pretty good for two iconic franchises, with Cody Bellinger and the Los Angeles Dodgers in control of the NL West again and Aaron Judge and the New York Yankees looking down on the rest of the AL East despite a rash of injuries.

"This team is capable of some great things," Yankees pitcher James Paxton said. "You've got some really talented players here, guys with a lot of drive, great leadership. We're set up really well to make a good run the second half here as well."

The one exception at the moment is the crazy NL

Central, where the Chicago Cubs have a 4½-game advantage — over last-place Cincinnati. Yup, that's right, it's just 4½ games from top to bottom, with Christian Yelich and Milwaukee a half-game back of Javier Báez and the inconsistent Cubbies.

"Nobody really wants to run away with it," Cardinals shortstop Paul DeJong said. "That gives us confidence as a group to think that we can run away with it."

It sets up for some very tough decisions ahead of the trade deadline after trade waivers were eliminated in the offseason, meaning no player can be traded after July 31 through the end of the regular season. Players who clear outright waivers can still be claimed and will be eligible for the postseason if they are in the organization before Sept. 1.

Buying or selling will be one tricky call for several teams, all the way to the final days of July. The hard deadline also could affect the prices for some of the top players on the market, possibilities like San Francisco pitchers Madison Bumgarner and Will Smith, Toronto right-hander Marcus Stroman and Detroit lefty Matthew Boyd.

"I know something could happen, but I don't take a peek at what people are



American League's Joey Gallo, left, of the Texas Rangers, is congratulated by American League teammate Francisco Lindor, of the Cleveland Indians, after Gallo hit a solo home run during the seventh inning of the MLB baseball All-Star Game, Tuesday, July 9, 2019, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

saying," Smith said. "There's so much out there, and you don't know what's true."

Cleveland could inject some drama into the AL Central as soon as this weekend, when Minnesota comes to town for a three-game series. The Indians hit the All-Star break with the majors' longest active win streak at six in a row, improving to 21-6 since June 1 and moving within 5½ games of the division-leading Twins.

"In the beginning it seemed like we were good, then all of a sudden in May we had that stretch where we weren't playing as good as we wanted to play," Lindor said. "But right now, we continue to play the game right and we're enjoying it, we're all having fun. We all get along, we love each

other, we back each other up. We're having a blast."

Washington also is having some fun again, moving into position to shake up the NL East after a terrible start to the season. Led by a resurgent Scherzer, the Nationals have won 15 of 19 to pull within six games of the division-leading Braves. Washington plays Atlanta 14 times in the last half of the season, including seven games in July.

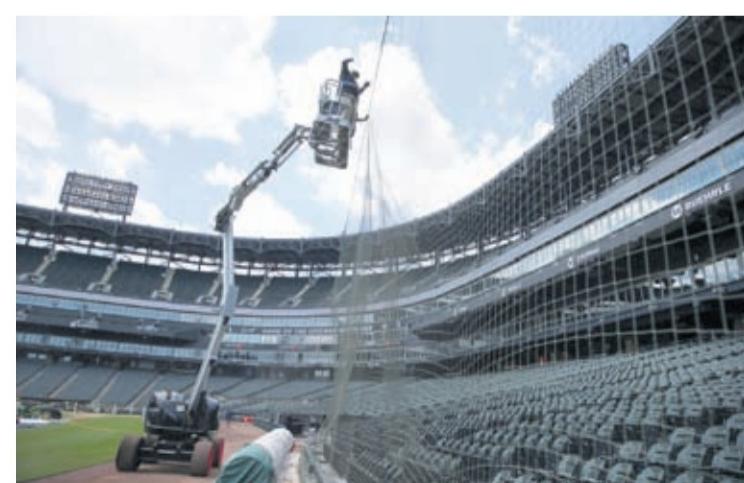
"When we can go out there and play our best baseball and play mistake-free baseball, we're a tough team and we can compete with anybody in this league," Scherzer said. The Nationals have seven players with at least 11 homers, led by Anthony Rendon with 20. But everyone is going deep these

days. Beginning with Thursday night's Astros-Rangers game in Arlington, the game's top sluggers resume their assault on an array of home run records. Yelich leads the way with 31 so far, putting together an appropriate encore to his NL MVP performance a year ago.

The majors are on pace for 6,668 homers, which would smash the record 6,105 hit in 2017, and the real heat of the summer, when hits pick up, is only just beginning.

"Guys are working year in and year out on their swings," Pittsburgh first baseman Josh Bell said during the All-Star break. "We're just focused on trying to put a show on for you guys." The show is on once again. □

White Sox begin placing extended netting to foul poles



Workers from C&H Baseball company install additional protective netting at Guaranteed Rate Field in Chicago on Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Work crews have begun extending the protective netting to the foul poles at Guaranteed Rate Field, a step the Chicago White Sox are taking following a couple of high-profile injuries this season.

The White Sox say the majority of the work should be completed Wednesday and the netting will be in place when the team returns home July 22 to host the Miami Marlins.

The White Sox are the first major league team to

take the step after a liner by Cubs outfielder Albert Almora Jr. struck a 4-year-old girl in Houston in May. A woman was hit by a foul ball off the bat of White Sox slugger Eloy Jiménez in Chicago on June 10.

Commissioner Rob Manfred has said extending protective netting down foul lines is a ballpark-to-ballpark decision because of differing configurations. Major League Baseball mandated ahead of the 2018 season that netting extend to the far

end of each dugout. The Pittsburgh Pirates, Texas Rangers and Washington Nationals are among the other teams that have announced they'll extend netting. □



AL fans 16, tops NL 4-3 to win 7th straight All-Star Game

By BEN WALKER
AP Baseball Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — For one night, the pitchers took back the power.

Hours after an awesome Home Run Derby got everyone buzzing even louder about monster shots and juiced balls, only a couple flew out of Progressive Field in the All-Star Game.

Instead, Justin Verlander blazed 97 mph heat from the start, Shane Bieber and Aroldis Chapman each struck out the side and the American League slowed a loaded NL lineup 4-3 Tuesday for its seventh straight win.

"I know it's the year of the home run, but pitching dominated today," Colorado slugger Nolan Arenado said.

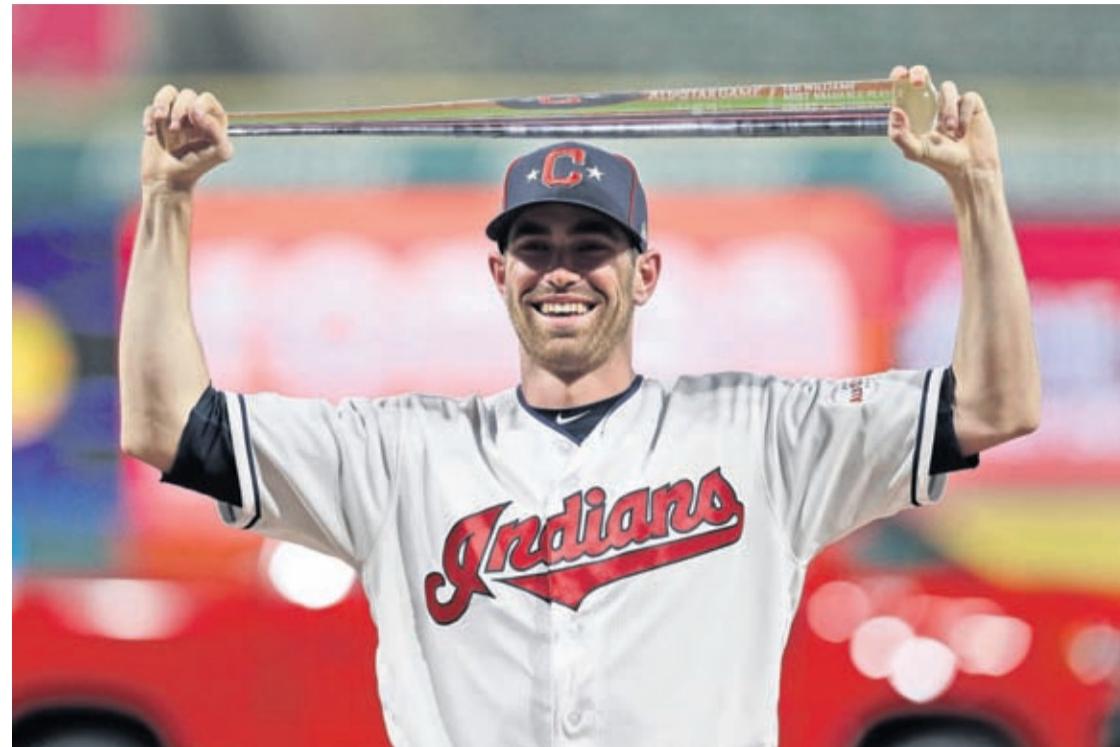
Sure did — at least until play resumes Thursday.

Facing Christian Yelich, Cody Bellinger and a bunch of boppers, the AL staff combined to strike out 16.

"Baseball is a funny game," said Bieber, a most unlikely MVP after being added late to the roster.

With fans hoping to see a replay of Monday's jaw-dropping aerial show when 312 homers cleared the walls, this became the All-Star Game up until the late innings.

Derby champ Pete Alonso of the Mets grounded a two-out, two-run single past Gleyber Torres in the



American League pitcher Shane Bieber, of the Cleveland Indians, holds the MVP trophy the MLB baseball All-Star Game, Tuesday, July 9, 2019, in Cleveland. The American League defeated the National League 4-3.

eighth to close the NL's gap. After a double steal put runners at second and third against Cleveland reliever Brad Hand, White Sox catcher James McCann made a tumbling catch on Mike Moustakas' twisting foul pop to end the inning. Chapman closed to give the AL its 19th win in 22 games, with a tie stuck in there. He got a little encouragement with two outs — Yankees teammate CC Sabathia, honored this week for his contributions on and off the field, strolled to the mound to talk to the flamethrower. Chapman then struck out

Yasmani Grandal for a save, giving the AL an overall 45-43-2 lead in the Midsummer Classic.

No need, either, for the experimental rule that was set to go effect: If the game went into extras, each team would've started the 10th with an automatic runner on second base. Major League Baseball is on a record-shattering pace for homers this season, but no one came close to clearing the walls until Charlie Blackmon connected in the NL sixth to make it 2-1. Texas' Joey Gallo countered with a solo drive in a two-run seventh.

Associated Press

Still, it was a far cry from last year's All-Star Game that featured a record 10 home runs.

"I kind of expected it, to be honest," former NL MVP Kris Bryant said. "You only see them once, so they have the advantage."

"There are a lot of hard throwers and great pitchers over there. Unless you've seen them before, it's a difficult matchup," he said. Cleveland favorite Michael Brantley had an early RBI double off losing pitcher Clayton Kershaw. Jorge Polanco drove in a run with an infield single for a 2-0 edge in the fifth and another

er scored on a double-play grounder.

"I wanted to swing the bat early. I had some nervous jitters I wanted to get out," Brantley said.

Winning pitcher Masahiro Tanaka, Lucas Giolito and Shane Greene did their parts to protect the lead with scoreless innings.

Bieber dazzled in front of a chanting home crowd, striking out Willson Contreras, Ketel Marte and Ronald Acuña Jr. in the fifth with a 1-0 lead. Bieber later donated his cap to the Hall of Fame.

"It was electric out there, the fans got in it and it was fun," AL manager Alex Cora of the Red Sox said.

"And I'm glad that he got the MVP. He plays at this level. He's really good."

The biggest misplay of the night might have been on the scoreboard. NL All-Stars David Dahl of Colorado and Willson Contreras of the Cubs had their names misspelled — "Davis Dahl" and "Wilson Contreras" — on the outfield videoboard.

Jeff McNeil was spelled correctly, but the photo accompanying it was of Mets teammate Jacob deGrom. "That was tough, to see deGrom's picture up there," McNeil said. "I didn't really like that. I wanted to see my picture up there. I know my family did, too. What are you going to do, I guess, but I don't think that should happen." □

Oops! All-Star scoreboard has rough night in Cleveland

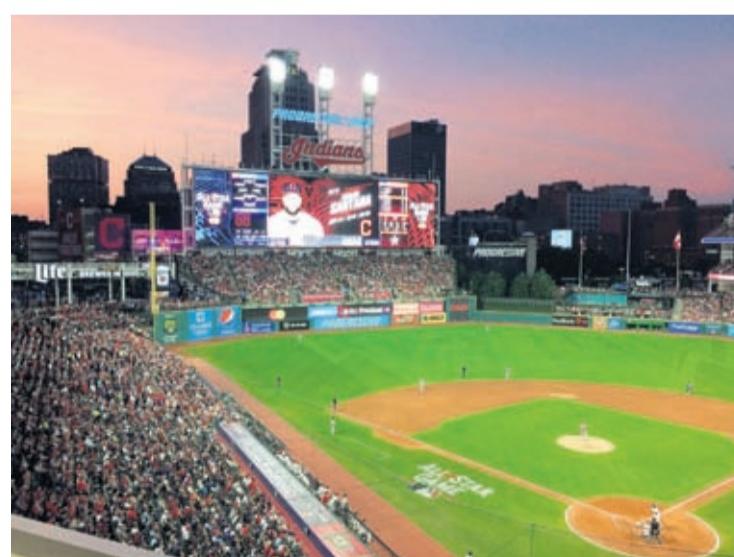
By BEN WALKER
AP Baseball Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — The only errors on the scoreboard at the All-Star Game were by the scoreboard.

At least one player noticed — and wasn't too pleased. The giant board at Progressive Field was filled with mistakes Tuesday night, including a couple of misspelled names, a wrong picture and a pair of incorrect team logos.

"They had what, two weeks to get ready for this? That can't happen," New York Mets sparkplug Jeff McNeil said.

McNeil is leading the ma-



Carlos Santana of the Cleveland Indians bats during the Major League Baseball All-Star Game at Progressive Field in Cleveland Tuesday, July 9, 2019.

Associated Press

jors with a .349 batting average, an impressive feat seeing how he made his major league debut less than a year ago.

A late sub, he came up for the National League in the eighth inning and noticed the headshot on the scoreboard wasn't of him. Instead, it was of Mets teammate Jacob deGrom.

"That was tough, to see deGrom's picture up there," McNeil said. "I didn't really like that."

"I wanted to see my picture up there. I know my family did, too. What are you going to do? I guess, but I don't think that should

happen," he said.

David Dahl didn't fare any better. The Colorado outfielder batted right before McNeil and was listed on the scoreboard as "Davis Dahl."

Same for Chicago Cubs catcher Willson Contreras. A starter, his first name was missing a letter and spelled "Wilson."

Big-hitting Cody Bellinger plays for the Los Angeles Dodgers and Ketel Marte is with the Arizona Diamondbacks, but when the starting lineups were shown, they both appeared with the logo of the Atlanta Braves. □

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If experience matters, Williams has a big edge at Wimbledon

By CHRIS LEHOURITES

AP Sports Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)

— One of the Wimbledon semifinalists has won 23 major titles.

The other three women playing Thursday have combined to win one. If experience and accomplishments count for anything, Serena Williams has the clear advantage.

"I definitely feel a lot more pressure as I got older," Williams said after beating Alison Riske in three sets in the quarterfinals, then clarifying just how much experience she actually has. "Now that I am past older, I feel a little bit less pressure."

The 37-year-old Williams, a seven-time Wimbledon champion, will be playing in the semifinals at the All England Club for the 12th time. Overall, she has reached the last four at 37 major tournaments, putting her in a tie with Steffi Graf for third most in the professional era.

Contrast that with her three remaining rivals.

Barbora Strycova, Williams' opponent on Thursday, will be playing in first major semifinal in her 53rd Grand Slam tournament, while Elina Svitolina will also be making her debut at this stage. Only former No. 1 Simona Halep has been a Grand Slam champion, winning last year's French Open, and will be playing in her seventh major semifinal.

"It was always my dream. Always, to play good at this tournament was my dream," said the 33-year-old Strycova, a Czech player who has been talking about retiring this year. "It's happening at this age right now. It's incredible."

Despite her less-illustrious list of achievements, Strycova is ready for the challenge of playing one of the greatest tennis players in history. "I don't have fear. I just will go there Thursday and I will try to play my game," Stry-



United States' Serena Williams celebrates after winning a point against United States' Alison Riske during a women's quarterfinal match on day eight of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Tuesday, July 9, 2019.

Associated Press

cova said.

"Of course, I don't have such a power like Serena, but I have (other) weapons. I will try to use them as

she has plenty to gain. The American superstar has been trying to equal the all-time record of Grand Slam singles titles of 24, but twice lost in finals last year.

One of those losses came at Wimbledon. The other, at the U.S. Open, was accompanied by a dramatic final set in which Williams was given three code violations. The second cost her a point, and the third cost her a game.

Naomi Osaka went on to the win that title in New York, and Williams had an article published in Harper's Bazaar magazine on Tuesday saying she has apologized to Osaka for her actions on the court — in part to find a way to move on from the episode and get back to tennis.

"I've had a lot of things happen to me at that particular tournament in general," Williams said.

"It was just important to always try to better yourself in any way that you can." □

Federer, Nadal to play at Wimbledon for 1st time since 2008

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)

— All these years later, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal will meet again at Wimbledon for the 40th installment of their terrific rivalry — and first at the All England Club since their memorable 2008 final.

"Such a long time," Nadal said. They moved on to the semifinal showdown everyone's been thinking about since the tournament draw by each overcoming a tough opening set Wednesday.

A 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 victory over Kei Nishikori gave the No. 2-seeded Federer his 100th match win at the All England Club, the first man to reach that total at any Grand Slam tournament. Not long after that ended on Centre Court, the No. 3-seeded Nadal finished off Sam Querrey 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 at No. 1 Court.

Friday's other semifinal will draw far less attention: No. 1 Novak Djokovic, the defending champion, against No. 23 Roberto Bautista Agut, never before this far at a major.

Looking ahead to what comes next for himself, Federer said: "Obviously, I know people always hype it up." Well, why shouldn't they? These are, after all, two of the greatest players in tennis' long history, winners of more Grand Slam titles than any other men. Of Federer's 20, a record eight came at Wimbledon. Of Nadal's 18, 12 came at the French Open, where he routed Federer in the semi-

finals last month.

That gave Nadal a 24-15 career edge head-to-head, including 10-3 at the Slams.

But that one was on the red clay Nadal rules. This one is on Federer's territory: grass. This is their fourth matchup at Wimbledon — and first that won't come in the final. Federer beat Nadal for the 2006 and 2007 titles, but Nadal won the championship 11 years ago in a 9-7 fifth set as dusk descended. "Well, we have a lot of information on Rafa, and so does he about us," Federer said. "So you can either dive into tactics and all that stuff like mad for two days — or you're just going to say: 'You know what? It's grass-court tennis and I'm going to come out there and play attacking tennis.' And if he can defend that, that's too good. And if he can't, well, then, that's good for me."

It is the 13th time that the Big Three of Federer, Nadal and Djokovic are in the semifinals at a major tournament together. On 11 of the previous occasions, one of them claimed the title. There were some shaky moments for each Wednesday.

"The beginning," Federer said, "was brutal."

The eighth-seeded Nishikori jumped out to an early edge by breaking in the very first game, enough to give him that set.

But Federer quickly turned things around in the second, conjuring up whatever he wanted, exactly when he wanted it.



Spain's Rafael Nadal celebrates winning a men's quarterfinal match against United States' Sam Querrey on day nine of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

His approach shots were beyond reproach. His volleys vibrant. His returns were timed so well, and struck so violently, that one knocked the net-rushing Nishikori's racket plum out of his hands.

And Federer's serve? Sure, he faced break points, but he never allowed 2014 U.S. Open runner-up Nishikori to convert another.

"Overall, I'm just very happy how I'm hitting the ball," Federer said. "Feel good off the baseline, too, which is clearly going to be important, maybe, for the next match."

Yeah, maybe.

Nadal, of course, is still a ball-retrieving, shot-whipping machine at the back of the court. He did have

some trouble closing out the first set against Querrey, an American ranked 65th who was trying to reach his second Wimbledon semifinal. Nadal wasted three set points at 5-3, then another before getting broken when serving for it at 5-4. Again serving for that set at 6-5, he erased a trio of break points for Querrey before holding — and finally was on his way.

"I definitely think he's a guy that can win it again," Querrey said about two-time Wimbledon champ Nadal.

Djokovic, eyeing a fifth trophy at the All England Club and 16th overall at Slams, used a 10-game run to transform what was shaping up as an even, enter-

taining quarterfinal into a 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 romp against 21st-seeded David Goffin.

"I felt," Djokovic said, "like I managed to dismantle his game." Down an early break, the defending champion grabbed control midway through the opening set and never let go. "He was everywhere," Goffin said.

Djokovic did to Goffin exactly what he does to so many men on so many surfaces and at so many tournaments: He takes their best shot, deals with it and then wears them down.

"I sincerely hope," Djokovic said, "that my opponent feels like he's got to work twice as (hard as) against any other opponent to win a point." □

CONCACAF limits direct World Cup qualifying to top 6

MIAMI (AP) — CONCACAF is limiting direct qualifying for the World Cup to only its six highest-ranked nations.

The regional governing body for North and Central America and the Caribbean announced a new qualifying format on Wednesday and scrapped the early stages that led to the six-nation final round in place since the 1998 tournament, known as the hexagonal.

Instead, the six highest-ranked nations as of next June will go directly to the hexagonal. The decision

reduces the number of qualifying matches for the United States to 10, instead of 16 to 18.

Mexico (No. 18 in the FIFA rankings), the U.S. (30), Costa Rica (39), Jamaica (54), Honduras (61) and El Salvador (69) are the current top six, followed by Panama (75), Canada (78), Curacao (79) and Trinidad and Tobago (92).

The U.S. will be trying to rebound from its failure to qualify for last year's tournament in Russia, which ended a streak of seven straight World Cup appearances.

Each team in the hex plays 10 qualifiers, which will take place in September, October and November 2020, and in March and September of 2021 — ending 14 months before the 32-nation tournament in Qatar kicks off in November 2022. The top three nations will qualify.

CONCACAF nations ranked seventh through 35th will compete to determine which nation meets the No. 4 team in the hex in a home-and-home playoff for the right to meet a nation from another region in a home-and-home playoff for a

World Cup berth. The United States started in the second round for 2006 and 2010, needing to win a home-and-home series each time to advance to the 12-nation semifinal round. For 1998, 2002, 2014 and 2018, the Americans started at the 12-nation semifinals.

In November 2000, the U.S. was 27 minutes from elimination in its semifinal finale at Barbados before rebounding for a 4-0 win. In 2012 and 2016, the Americans also entered the last semifinal match still needing to clinch advancement. □

NBA's Silver says changes to rules on draft trades possible

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — NBA Commissioner Adam Silver wants the hat game fixed. Mindful that it was awkward for draft picks this year who were selected by one team and had already been traded to another — but because of league rules, were unable to be introduced by their actual franchise for more than two weeks — Silver said there was discussion Tuesday at the league's board of governors meeting about how to change that going forward.

Several ideas are under discussion, including changing the rules about how and when draft-night trades can be announced. It could be earlier next season and not necessarily attached to the early July end to the moratorium on trades and certain signings.

"We've got to fix that," Silver said.

First-round picks were issued hats to wear on stage at the draft, corresponding with the team that chose them. De'Andre Hunter went No. 4 overall, taken by the Los Angeles Lakers. His rights had been traded twice — first to New Orleans as part of the Anthony Davis deal, then to Atlanta. But since neither of those trades could be finalized before July 6, Hunter wore



In this Thursday, June 20, 2019, file photo, Virginia's De'Andre Hunter, right, is greeted by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver after being selected with the fourth pick overall by the Los Angeles Lakers during the NBA basketball draft in New York.

a Lakers cap on stage. "We talk about being fan friendly, and that isn't fan friendly," Silver said. There are plenty of changes that will be under consideration in the next few months, including one about the rules regarding the start to the negotiating period for free agents. Silver said that was also a topic among the board of governors on Tuesday. For the draft night-traded players, it's about more

than the hats. Because some draftees couldn't be part of their franchises before July 6, they were assured of missing the start of NBA Summer League. It cost a few players the chance to play in summer league at all, which disappointed many of them. That won't be an issue next year, with Summer League in Las Vegas scheduled to begin on July 10, 2020, long after the NBA's new league year is likely to be-

Associated Press

gin. So any draft pick that gets traded on draft night should, in theory, be with his actual team in plenty of time to take part in summer contests.

But this year, it was an issue. "I was really disappointed," Phoenix rookie Ty Jerome said.

Former North Carolina forward Cam Johnson wound up with Phoenix after being drafted No. 11 by Minnesota. By the time the draft could be executed, the

Suns felt it was too late to put Johnson and Jerome — the No. 24 pick whose rights were traded twice on his way to Phoenix — on the floor for summer league.

So they remained in a cautious state of limbo for a couple of weeks, because an injury could have potentially derailed any trades.

"The one thing I was told was just to lay low," Johnson said. "As much as I wanted to go out there, I wanted to play pickup, I was back at Carolina for a week and there were alumni games and all that that I didn't really take part in because I was told to lay low — which I did. A lot of court workouts, a little one-on-one every now and then, a lot of lifting, staying under the radar but continuing to work."

Atlanta general manager Travis Schlenk said he thought this year was an outlier on the picks-being-traded front, simply because of how many teams found themselves in situations where moves were possible.

The Hawks introduced their draft picks, Hunter and Bruno Fernando, in Las Vegas this past weekend instead of in Atlanta, because both were draft picks whose rights were held up in trades until the moratorium was lifted and swaps could be finalized. □

Brown has triple double, Pistons beat 76ers 96-81

By The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Bruce Brown had a triple double and the Detroit Pistons beat the Philadelphia 76ers 96-81 on Wednesday to remain unbeaten in the NBA Summer League.

Brown, entering his second year with Detroit, had 11 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists to help the Pistons improve to 4-0. The 22-year-old point guard played in 74 games last season for Detroit and averaged 4.3 points, 1.2 assists and 19.6 minutes per game.

Matt Costello added 18 points and seven rebounds, Todd Withers had 14 points, and Jarrod Uthoff 13.

Rookie Matisse Thybulle



Orlando Magic's DaQuan Jeffries, right, drives into Brooklyn Nets' Josh Gray during the second half of an NBA summer league basketball game Wednesday, July 10, 2019, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

and Jalen Jones each had 12 points for the 76ers (1-3).

MAVERICKS 79, CROATIA 71

Josh Reaves scored 15 points, Antonius Cleveland had 14 and Dallas beat Croatia to improve to 3-1. Daryl Macon added nine points and six assists, but had six turnovers. The Mavericks shot 55.8% from the field, but made just 5 of 19 shots from 3-point range.

Roko Rogic led Croatia with 15 points, and Antonio Vrankovic, Mateo Dreznjak, and Pavle Marcinkovic each had 12.

BULLS 75, HORNETS 72

Daniel Gafford had 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Chandler Hutchinson added 18 points and nine

rebounds in Chicago's victory over Charlotte. Coby White, Chicago's first round pick, had 11 points on 4-of-17 shooting. He also had seven rebounds and five assists. Chicago is 2-2. Devonte Graham had 15 points and eight rebounds for Charlotte (1-3).

NETS 93, MAGIC 85

Dzanan Musa scored 20 points and Jarrett Allen had 14 points and 13 rebounds to help New Jersey beat Orlando. The Nets (3-1) outrebounded the Magic 45-30. Jeremiah Hill had 21 points and six assists, and Amile Jefferson had 18 points and eight rebounds for Orlando (1-3). DaQuan Jeffries added 15 points. □



Matthew Wolff holds the trophy after winning the 3M Open golf tournament Sunday, July 7, 2019, in Blaine, Minn.

Associated Press

John Deere

Continued from Page 17

That, too, is a possibility this week: The top finisher not already exempt who finishes in the top 5 at TPC Deere Run will qualify to play next week at Royal Portrush — and get a seat on the charter flight that the John Deere Classic provides to players making the trip to Northern Ireland.

If he doesn't get there this year, there appear to be plenty of major championship starts in the future for Wolff, who has always shown huge potential.

Wolff, who grew up in Southern California, earned freshman All-America honors for the Cowboys in 2017-18 before winning the NCAA individual title in May. After missing the cut at the Rocket Mortgage Classic, Wolff shot 62-65 over the weekend at the 3M Open, securing the win with a 25-foot putt for eagle from the collar of the 18th green.

That made him the seventh player in the past 80 years to win a PGA Tour event before turning 21, and the other six — Spieth, Tiger Woods, Seve Ballesteros, Phil Mickelson, Raymond Floyd and Rory McIlroy — went on to win multiple majors.

Wolff and his assistant Cole Spradlin rented a van and drove straight from Minnesota to the Quad Cities, arriving around 2:30 a.m. Monday.

"It's a dream come true.

I'll say that over and over again. My life changed as soon as that putt went in," Wolff said. "But it only lasts so long, and my goal is to become the No. 1 player in the world."

He's now 135th, but that figures to change soon, too.

The John Deere Classic has long made up for its lack of star power by using sponsor exemptions to lure some of the game's brightest prospects to its event.

This year's newcomers will include Cal's Collin Morikawa, who finished one shot behind Wolff in Minnesota. Morikawa's performance earned him special temporary membership on the PGA Tour, meaning he can use unlimited sponsor exemptions in a bid to earn his tour card for next season.

Morikawa, who'll be making his fifth career start, will be joined by fellow rookies Viktor Hovland and Justin Suh.

"Obviously the goal coming into this summer was to earn a full card for next year," Morikawa said. "We're almost there."

One player who doesn't come in with much momentum is defending champion Michael Kim. After winning at TPC Deere Run by eight shots, matching the largest margin of victory on tour in 2018, Kim began working on swing changes with coach John Tillery and has missed 17 cuts in a row. □



Slovakia's Peter Sagan wearing the best sprinter's green jersey celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the fifth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 175.5 kilometers (109 miles) with start in Saint-Dié-Des-Vosges and finish in Colmar, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

Tour de France Stage 6 climb to rob also-rans of hidey holes

By JOHN LEICESTER

AP Sports Writer

COLMAR, France (AP) — With four-time winner Chris Froome out, nursing broken bones, two of the big questions at this Tour de France have been whether other contenders who've long ridden in his shadow will now be more willing to attack and who, on his team, will fill the vacuum left by the British rider's absence.

On Thursday, the Tour is expecting some answers.

A fiercely steep climb on Stage 6, with an eye-popping 24% gradient at the top, should separate genuine contenders for the Tour title from also-rans.

On the 7-kilometer (4-mile) uphill to the Planche des Belles Filles ski station, scaled with legs already stinging from a succession of climbs earlier in the day, there'll be no hiding places for riders who aren't in tip-top shape.

For riders looking to profit while Froome recovers from a horrific crash in training, the hairpin bends among dense woods often thick with mushrooms in autumn will be their chance to make a mark, to stamp their authority on the race as Froome did so often when roads went uphill at previous Tours.

"We will find out a lot," defending champion Geraint Thomas said. "It will be a challenge."

One of those challenges could come from within Thomas' own team, in the shape of lithe Colombian climber Egan Bernal.

With Froome out, Thomas and Bernal have been promoted to co-leaders at Ineos. But that precarious balancing act between two contenders for a title that only one of them can win in Paris on July

28 could start to fall apart if one of them seriously struggles and is left behind by the other.

The particular sharpness of the final climb would appear, on paper, to be more suited to Bernal, as suggested when he got a five-second jump on Thomas on a much shorter but also quite steep incline at the end of Stage 3. By no means a disaster for Thomas, it was still a possible harbinger for Thursday's far longer and taxing final ascent.

"That sort of climb favors the punchy, pure climbers, Egan for one," Thomas acknowledged.

Although only riding his second Tour, Bernal is wowing his teammates. Luke Rowe, who rode with Froome for three of his Tour wins, says Bernal has the same "pit-bull mentality."

"They want to go out there and they want to rip the legs of people. They've just got that tenacious mentality, and Egan has that," he said.

For French rider Julian Alaphilippe, Stage 6 will be another day to savor in the canary-yellow jersey, after he held onto the overall race lead on Stage 5. But Alaphilippe is not a pure climber. More the explosive, instinctive type, Alaphilippe may struggle to keep up with mountain specialists like Bernal should they go full-gas.

Or he may not. Because it's not as long, high or arduous as even tougher climbs lurking in the Alps and Pyrenees, he might cling on as the first French rider in yellow for five years.

And the climb could fizzle rather than pop, playing to Alaphilippe's hand, if top title contenders decide to hold back, preferring to save their biggest battles for decisive climbs in Week 3. □

Trump v. Big Tech: Social media summit will snub tech titans

By MARCY GORDON

AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

President Donald Trump is gathering conservative groups at the White House this week for a "summit" on social media that will prominently snub the tech titans who run big platforms on Facebook, Twitter and Google.

It's a sharp contrast to earlier days in Trump's tenure when tech executives were occasional celebrity guests at the White House, serving as a fresh indication of the president's escalating battle with Big Tech.

Now, Trump regularly accuses the big social media platforms of suppressing conservative voices. He has suggested the companies may be acting illegally and should be sued by U.S. regulators.

White House spokesman Judd Deere said the White House conference on Thursday would bring together "digital leaders for a robust conversation on the opportunities and challenges of today's online environment."

But Google, Facebook and Twitter weren't invited, their representatives confirmed. And their leaders may be more likely to turn up Thursday at an annual media industry conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, a venue oriented more toward high-



President Donald Trump meets with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani in the Oval Office of the White House, Tuesday, July 9, 2019, in Washington.

stakes deal-making than reflections on perceived bias in online communications. The White House had no comment on why top tech officials weren't invited or on whether the conference was deliberately scheduled to overlap with the meeting in Idaho.

Among the conservative organizations that are expected to participate in the White House meeting: Turning Point USA; PragerU, short for Prager University, which puts out short videos with a conservative perspective on politics or economics; and the Wash-

ington think tank Heritage Foundation.

Trump and some supporters have long accused Silicon Valley companies of being biased against them. Accusations commonly leveled against the platforms include anti-religious bias, a tilt against those opposed to abortion and censorship of conservative political views. While some company executives may lean liberal, they have long asserted that their products are without political bias. Representatives for Facebook, Google and Twitter declined to comment

Associated Press

specifically on Thursday's meeting. But the Internet Association, the industry's major trade group representing Facebook, Google and dozens of other companies, said the internet "offers the most open and accessible form of communication available today." Its members' platforms "don't have a political ideology or political bias," the group's president and CEO Michael Beckerman said in a statement. He added that the companies "succeed and grow by building a broad user base regardless of party affiliation or

political perspectives."

Twitter spokeswoman Katie Rosborough, in a statement, said "We enforce the Twitter rules impartially for all users, regardless of their background or political affiliation. We are constantly working to improve our systems and will continue to be transparent in our efforts." Trump has played to conservative concerns about bias on other issues. In March, he signed an executive order requiring U.S. colleges to protect free speech on their campuses or risk losing federal research funding. The order cheered those who said universities were attempting to silence some conservative students and speakers. But critics called the order unnecessary.

The president himself was dealt a setback Tuesday in his legal battle against Twitter, his favored means of communicating. A federal appeals court in New York City ruled that the president can't ban critics from his Twitter account, saying the First Amendment calls for more speech, rather than less, on matters of public concern.

Trump has an estimated 61 million followers on Twitter. He has accused Twitter of making it "very hard for people to join me" and "very much harder for me to get out the message." □

UK health service to use Amazon Alexa to give medical advice

By KELVIN CHAN

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Alexa will see you now.

Britain's health care service is teaming up with Amazon's digital voice assistant to help answer medical queries with advice from the service's official website. Critics, however, warn about risks to data privacy. The British government said Wednesday that the system will help people get quick and accurate health information. It will be especially useful for senior citizens, blind people and others who find it hard to access the internet while also easing pressure on doctors. Using Amazon's algorithms,



In this Monday, Aug. 7, 2017 file photo, an Amazon Alexa display is seen at a store in Hialeah, Fla.

Alexa can answer voice questions from users about common maladies such as

It's part of the British government's long-term modernization plan to provide more digital health services.

"We want to empower every patient to take better control of their health care," said Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

Privacy campaigners said that while making it easier for people to access reliable medical advice was a step in the right direction, they were concerned about the partnership and its implications.

"Amazon is a company with a worrying track record when it comes to the way they handle their users' data," said Eva Blum-

Dumontet, a researcher at Privacy International.

"Our medical information is often the most sensitive data there is about us and a lot can be inferred from the questions we ask and the searches we make when we have health concerns."

Privacy concerns surrounding voice assistants have come into focus amid reports that services like Alexa are listening and recording conversations in homes. A lawsuit filed last month in U.S. federal court alleged that Amazon is violating laws in eight states by recording children without consent through Alexa devices. □

Stocks rise, led by tech sector, as Fed signals rate cut

By ALEX VEIGA
Associated Press

Stocks moved higher Wednesday as Wall Street welcomed new signals from the Federal Reserve that the central bank is ready to cut interest rates for the first time in a decade.

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said that many Fed officials believe a weakening global economy and rising trade tensions have strengthened the case for a rate cut.

Powell's remarks, which he delivered as part of his semi-annual monetary report to Congress, allayed investors' concerns that an unexpectedly strong U.S. jobs report on Friday might give the Fed reason to stay put on interest rates.

"Investors are increasingly confident that the Fed will cut rates by a quarter-point at the end of the month, which most investors expected," said Kate Warne, chief investment strategist at Edward Jones. "This removed a little bit of the uncertainty there, and that's why we're seeing stocks move higher."

The market rallied through much of June after the Fed first signaled that it might cut rates if necessary to shore up the U.S. economy. Wednesday's rally briefly



In this June 18, 2019, file photo specialist Dilip Patel works at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

sent the S&P 500 index trading above 3,000 for the first time before losing some of its momentum by midmorning. Even so, the benchmark index is on track to close at an all-time high. The index hit record highs three straight days last week.

Technology companies accounted for much of the market's gains. Micron Technology climbed 3.5% and Western Digital rose 4.4%. Communications services stocks and con-

sumer goods makers also rose. Take-Two Interactive added 1.6% and Procter & Gamble picked up 1%.

Energy stocks also headed higher as the price of U.S. crude oil climbed 4%. Chevron rose 1.4%.

Bond prices rose sharply, sending the yield in the 10-year Treasury note down to 2.07% from 2.10% shortly before Powell's remarks were released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

The drop in yields pulled bank shares lower. When

bond yields decline they drive the interest rates that lenders charge for mortgages and other loans lower. Citizens Financial Group dropped 2.1%.

Industrials and materials stocks also lagged the market. Deere & Co. slid 1.1% and Corteva lost 1%.

KEEPING SCORE: The S&P 500 index rose 0.6% as of 1:47 p.m. Eastern time.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 128 points, or 0.5%, to 26,912. The Nasdaq added 0.8% and the

Associated Press

Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks rebounded from a brief slide, gaining 0.4%.

Major stock indexes in Europe were mixed.

SIGNALING A RATE CUT: Powell's testified before the House Financial Services Committee. On Thursday, he appears before the Senate Banking Committee.

His testimony comes at a time when the U.S. economic landscape is mixed. While the job market appears resilient and consumer spending and home sales look solid, the economy is likely slowing. And the U.S. trade disputes have added uncertainty to the economic outlook.

In his prepared statement, Powell said that since Fed officials met last month, "uncertainties around trade tensions and concerns about the strength of the global economy continue to weigh on the U.S. economic outlook." Meanwhile, inflation has fallen farther from the Fed's target.

The Fed's benchmark rate currently stands in a range of 2.25% to 2.5% after the central bank boosted rates four times last year. Many investors have put the odds of a rate cut this month at 100%. □

China's June auto sales fall, extending year-old decline

By JOE McDONALD
Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's auto sales fell 7.8% in June amid a trade fight with Washington and slower economic growth, extending an unexpectedly painful downturn for automakers that are spending heavily to develop electric cars. Drivers in the global industry's biggest market bought 1.7 million SUVs, sedans and minivans, according to an industry group, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Total purchases in the first six months of 2019 fell 14% from a year earlier to 10.1 million vehicles, CAAM said. That was below industry forecasts of flat to slightly lower growth this year. Sales growth turned neg-

ative last June as jittery consumers put off big purchases amid unease about China's economic outlook and tensions with President Donald Trump over Beijing's technology ambitions. Growth in the second-largest global economy held steady in the latest quarter but that was supported by government spending and higher bank lending.

The past year is "a sobering lesson for anyone who believed that growth in autos could happen in straight lines," Bernstein analysts Robin Zhu and Luke Hong said in a report this week. "As it turned out, autos is cyclical, even in China." That is squeezing global and Chinese automakers that are racing to meet government sales targets



In this April 16, 2019, file photo, Wang Chuanfu, chairman and president of BYD Auto, the biggest global electric brand by sales volume, prepares to show the latest cars during the Auto Shanghai 2019 show in Shanghai.

Associated Press

for electric cars. Last year's auto sales suffered their first decline in nearly three decades, falling 4.1% from 2017 to 23.7 million.

In June, total vehicle purchases, including trucks

buses, declined 9.6% from a year earlier to 2 million.

June sales by Chinese brands declined 12.2% to 664,000. Their market share lost 3.9 percentage points to 39.5%. Purchases

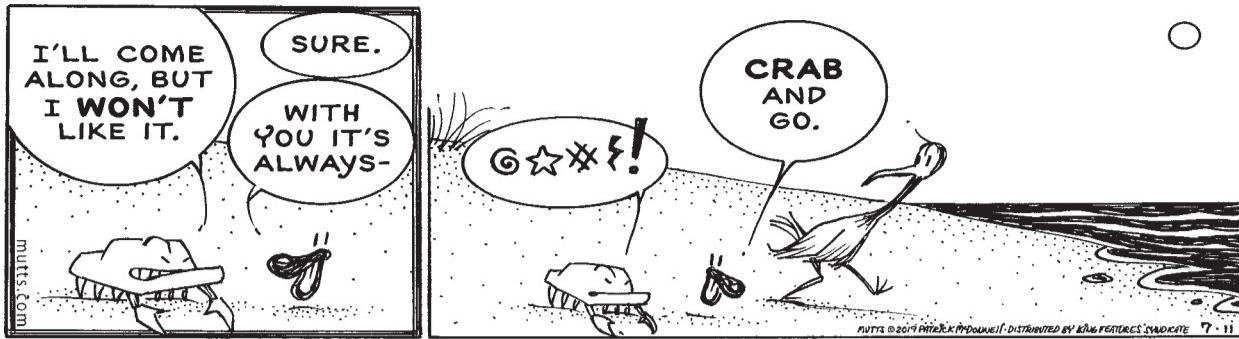
of pure-electric and gasoline-electric hybrid SUVs, sedans and minivans rose 80% to 152,000.

Beijing has promoted electrics with billions of dollars in research grants and buyer subsidies. But subsidies are due to end next year and regulators are shifting the burden to automakers by imposing mandatory sales targets for electrics.

That requires automakers to pour money into developing electrics that can compete with gasoline-powered vehicles on price, performance and style.

One of China's most ambitious domestic brands, Geely Auto, reported this week its June sales were down 29%. It warned its first-half profit would fall by 40%. □

Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



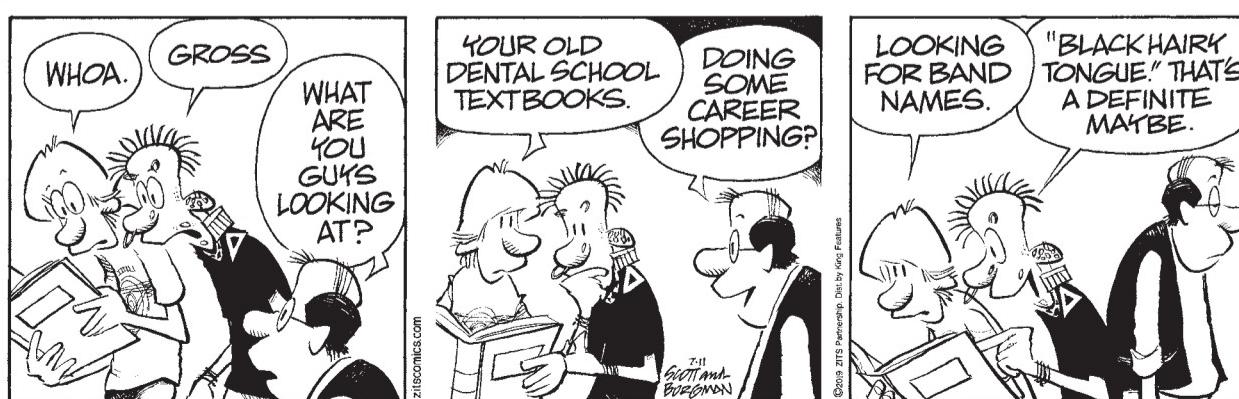
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

6									5	7	1
1	7	2							8		
8									5	2	
									6		
3	9									2	8
	1								3		
5	4	7								3	

Difficulty Level ★★★

7/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

8	3	4	2	9	7	5	6	1			
7	5	2	6	1	3	4	8	9			
6	1	9	5	4	8	3	7	2			
1	2	3	8	7	5	9	4	6			
5	8	7	4	6	9	2	1	3			
9	4	6	3	2	1	8	5	7			
2	6	1	9	8	4	7	3	5			
3	9	8	7	5	6	1	2	4			
4	7	5	1	3	2	6	9	8			

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13		14	15						16		
17			18						19		
20		21							22		
			23						24	25	
26	27	28							29	30	
											31
										32	33
34								35			36
37								38			39
40								41			42
43								44			45
								46			47
48	49	50						51	52	53	
56								57			58
60								61			62
63								64			65

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

7/11/19

DOWN

- 1 Pro vote
- 2 Leave the room
- 3 __ out; become dilapidated
- 4 Eccentric
- 5 Those listed in a will
- 6 Ailments
- 7 Abscond
- 8 Tricycle riders
- 9 All __; clumsy
- 10 Remain optimistic
- 11 Monopoly token
- 12 Beach surface
- 14 Crushed
- 21 Calf meat
- 25 Fed
- 26 Leftover piece
- 27 Fight site
- 28 Canary's lunch
- 29 In good __; physically fit
- 30 Turner & Alien
- 31 Unlocks
- 32 Geeks
- 33 Aerosol
- 35 TV's 'To __ the Truth'

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

M	U	M	S	T	R	I	P	S	L	O	W
B	O	N	A	C	H	I	C	O	K	W	I
O	P	E	N	R	E	C	E	P	O	N	S
G	E	M	L	U	R	E	D	R	I	N	S
P	L	E	B	E	J	A	N				
S	A	L	O	N	S	N	E	I	G	H	S
A	D	O	P	T	P	L	E	A	T	A	S
R	O	Y	S	C	L	O	W	N	T	U	E
I	R	E	T	H	U	G	S	B	A	G	E
E	D	D	I	E	S	T	R	U	I	M	S
E	L	F	S	E	A	T	S	E	A	T	S
M	A	P	L	E	T	O	D	B	I	B	B
E	Q	U	E	S	R	I	A	N	T	U	A
A	U	N	T	S	I	N	K	S	A	R	C
L	A	K	E	P	O	Y	E	U	G	H	U

- 38 Ricochets
- 39 Square dance
- 41 Grasped
- 42 __ Here to Eternity"
- 44 Military attacks
- 45 Tommy or Jimmy
- 48 Mini blind piece
- 49 Drifter
- 50 __ child; kid with no siblings
- 52 Cruise stop
- 53 Penniless
- 54 Dirt
- 55 Old Roman robe
- 59 Bashful

Authorities: Missing Texas man was eaten by his own dogs

By JAKE BLEIBERG

Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A Texas man who had been missing for months was eaten, bones and all, by his pack of dogs, sheriff's deputies said.

Medical examiners said Tuesday that DNA testing determined that pieces of bone recovered from the dogs' feces were those of 57-year-old Freddie Mack, according to the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Aaron Pitts said the 18 mixed-breed dogs apparently devoured all of Mack's body, his clothing and his hair, leaving nothing larger than 2- to 5-inch bone fragments.

"Never have we ever, or anyone we've spoken to, heard of an entire human being consumed," Pitts told The Associated Press.

"The bones were completely broken up and eaten."

Mack had serious health problems, and it's unclear whether the dogs killed their owner or consumed his body after he died from a medical condition.

"Either way, it is a very gruesome event and we extend our sympathy to Freddie Mack's family," Sheriff Adam King said in a statement.

In May, a relative reported the reclusive Mack missing from his home near Venus, a community of fewer than 4,000 people about 30 miles (50 kilometers) southwest of Dallas, saying the family hadn't heard from him since mid-April.

The aggressive dogs stopped the family from entering Mack's property, and posed problems for deputies, who were eventually able to look around while keeping the dogs away with a "distraction method," according to the sheriff's office. □

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1BR Oceanfront \$18K
2BR Oceanview \$18K
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Aruba Divi Phoenix

1BR WK27
Studio WK27/28
30weeks \$8,5K 1BR
Studio \$7K

Marriott Surf Club

Platinum Season
2 BR Gardenview \$15K
2 BR Oceanview \$17K
2 BR Oceanside \$18K
2 BR Oceanfront \$27K
3 BR Oceanview \$28K

Marriott Surf Club

Gold Season
2 BR Gardenview \$7K
2 BR Oceanview \$8K
2 BR Oceanside \$9K
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'A floodier future': Scientists say records will be broken

By WAYNE PARRY
Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — The federal government is warning Americans to brace for a "floodier" future.

Government scientists predict 40 places in the U.S. will experience higher than normal rates of so-called sunny day flooding this year because of rising sea levels and an abnormal El Niño weather system.

A report released Wednesday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts that sunny day flooding, also known as tidal flooding, will continue to increase.

"The future is already here, a floodier future," said William Sweet, a NOAA oceanographer and lead author of the study.

The report predicted that annual flood records will be broken again next year and for years and decades to come from sea-level rise. "Flooding that decades ago usually happened only during a powerful or localized storm can now happen when a steady breeze or a change in coastal current overlaps with a high tide," it read.

The nationwide average frequency of sunny day flooding in 2018 was five days a year, tying a record set in 2015.

But the East Coast averaged twice as much flooding.

The agency says the level of sunny day flooding in the U.S. has doubled since 2000. Nationwide, the agency predicted, average sunny day flooding could reach 7 to 15 days a year by 2030, and 25 to 75 days a year by 2050.

"We cannot wait to act," said Nicole LeBoeuf, acting director of NOAA's Ocean



In this Oct. 5, 2017, file photo, residents move a "no wake" sign through flood waters caused by king tides in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Service. "This issue gets more urgent and complicated with every passing day." Global sea levels are rising at a rate of about 3 millimeters a year, or about an inch every eight years, according to Rutgers University researchers, who predict that by 2050, seas off New Jersey will rise by an additional 1.4 feet (0.4 meters).

The study noted floods interfering with traffic in northeast states, swamping septic systems in Florida and choking Delaware and Maryland coastal farms with saltwater over the past year.

Baltimore experienced 12 days of high-tide flooding from 1902 to 1936. Within the last 12 months, it experienced an additional 12 days. Robert Kopp, a leading climate scientist with Rutgers University, who was not involved in the study, said it confirmed many well-established trends.

"It's simple arithmetic: If you have higher sea level, you will have tides causing flooding," he said.

"We're not talking about disaster flooding. We're talking about repetitive flooding that disrupts people's lives on a daily basis. It's sometimes called 'nuisance flooding,' but it has real impacts and costs."

The report cited the disruption of commerce in downtown Annapolis, Maryland, where parking spaces are lost to flooding.

A 2017 study put the price tag on lost economic activity at as much as \$172,000. The water table has risen to ground level and degraded septic systems in the Mi-

ami region, and farmlands in the Delmarva Peninsula in Delaware and Maryland have been damaged by salt water encroaching into planted areas.

High-tide flooding is causing problems including beach erosion, overwhelmed sewer and drinking water systems, closed roadways, disrupted harbor operations, degraded infrastructure and reduced property values — problems which "are nearly certain to get much worse this century," the report read.

The report's statistics cov-

Associated Press

er May 2018 through April 2019. The agency forecasts sunny-day flooding this year in Boston at 12 to 19 days (it had 19 last year).

It predicted sunny-day flooding this year in New York (8 to 13 days, compared with 12 last year); Norfolk, Virginia (10 to 15 days; compared to 10 days last year); Charleston, South Carolina (4 to 7 days, compared to 5 last year); Pensacola, Florida (2 to 5 days compared with 4 last year); Sabine Pass, Texas (6 to 13 days compared with 8 last year) and Eagle Point, Texas (29 to 40 days, compared to 27 last year).

West coast predictions included San Diego (5 to 9 days compared to 8 last year); Los Angeles (1 to 4 days compared to 5 last year); Humboldt Bay, California (6 to 12 days compared to 12 last year); Toke Point, Washington (9 to 21 days compared to 12 last year) and 2 to 6 days in Seattle, compared to 2 last year.

The report documented that 12 locations broke or ties their record of sunny day flooding last year, including 22 in Washington, D.C., 14 in Wilmington, North Carolina; and 12 each in Baltimore and Annapolis. □

Virgin Orbit conducts drop-test of rocket from Boeing 747

By JOHN ANTICZAK

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Virgin Galactic's sister company Virgin Orbit conducted a drop test of its air-launched satellite booster over California on Wednesday, a key step toward space missions.

The 70-foot (21.3-meter) LauncherOne rocket was released from a Boeing 747 flying 35,000 feet (10,668 meters) over an Edwards Air Force Base test range in the Mojave Desert.

The purpose of the test was to observe how the rocket detached from the 747's wing and its free-fall to the desert floor before the first actual orbital launch later this year.



In this photo provided by Virgin Orbit, a rocket is dropped from a Boeing 747 airplane flying above Edwards Air Force Base in California, Wednesday, July 10, 2019.

Associated Press

The test did not involve the ignition of the rocket motor.

"The release was extremely smooth, and the rocket fell away nicely," Chief Test Pilot Kelly Latimer said.

Virgin Orbit CEO Dan Hart said it was "a monumental step forward" for the proj-

ect.

"It's the capstone to a thorough development program not just for a rocket, but for our carrier aircraft, our ground support equipment, and all of our flight procedures," he said in a statement. □

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"The Lion King" cast talks reimagining the Disney classic

By KATIE CAMPIONE

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Disney's "The Lion King" has received no shortage of remakes and spinoffs in the years since its original 1994 release. Now, as the film reaches its silver anniversary, Disney delivers a new take on the animated musical.

Cast and crew gathered in Hollywood for "The Lion King" world premiere Tuesday night, and discussed reimagining the classic.

"I think I'm really lucky, because I feel like a lot of the people who are experiencing it don't remember the first one," joked Donald Glover, who voices adult Simba.

"(The original film) is such a big part of who I was," Glover continued, adding he felt the weight of his role especially during his duet of "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?" with co-star Beyoncé. While the remake pays homage to the source material, a new approach allowed for more creative liberties than its predecessor, many cast and crew noted.

Hans Zimmer, who composed the original film's underscore, said he was excited to produce new compositions as well as revamp original music cues.



Bob Iger, left, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, poses with "The Lion King" cast member Beyoncé, center, and the film's director Jon Favreau at the premiere of the film at the El Capitan Theatre, Tuesday, July 9, 2019, in Los Angeles.

"This time, I could breathe," he said, explaining that some of his music was performed too fast the first time around. "I could let them play properly. I could do things with them that I never did before."

Composer Lebo M. said the remake will feature tunes from the original, and a host of new songs, as well as the anthem "He Lives in

You," which debuted in the stage production.

"We wrote it originally for the movie 25 years ago, and it made its mark on Broadway and around the world, and it's now a very special version in this movie soundtrack," he said. "The music department, we went crazy."

At times, so did the cast. Actor Billy Eichner, who

voices Timon, said director Jon Favreau (who also helmed Disney's recent "The Jungle Book") allowed him to record his voiceovers alongside his co-star Seth Rogen, the voice of Pumbaa. Most voice actors do the job solo.

"I think it all comes back to Jon Favreau for being brilliant and knowing how to do a big spectacular film

Associated Press

that people can also relate to and make it feel organic and genuinely funny," Eichner said. "Even when Donald Glover came in to do 'Hakuna Matata' in our scenes together, we were all riffing. We kept it very organic and very raw, and I think the movie hopefully benefits from that."

Glover shared a similar sentiment about Favreau, saying the director's vision for the remake is the reason he signed on.

"The story of us all being connected is a universal truth that we really can't ignore anymore," he said. "If we don't really like see the value of our lives together what's the point of all this? Because we're all connected."

The vibrant red carpet hosted stars including former Destiny's Child singers Michelle Williams and Kelly Rowland, Tiffany Haddish, Jamie Foxx, Chrissy Metz, Tracy Morgan, Yara Shahidi, Chloe x Halle, and Zooey Deschanel (whose father, Caleb Deschanel, is the cinematographer). Inside, Favreau introduced the cast, who were met with a standing ovation before the film started. He also singled out filmmakers of the animated original that were in the audience for special thanks. □

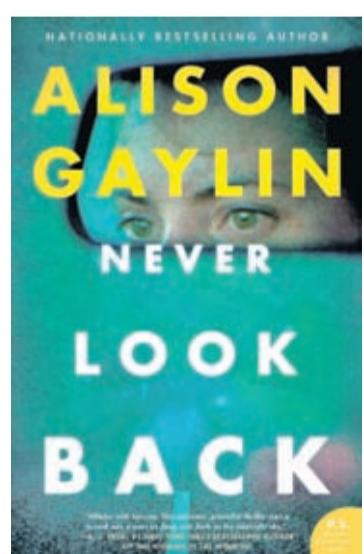
Alison Gaylin probes how violence affects families

By OLIVE H. COGDILL

Associated Press

"Never Look Back" by Alison Gaylin (William Morrow) The popularity of true crime podcasts bleeds into the tightly plotted "Never Look Back" by Alison Gaylin. Her fictional hero Quentin Garrison uses his position as the interviewer for the L.A.-based podcast "Closure" to chronicle how violence affects families for decades in various ways.

Alison Gaylin's 11th novel perceptively examines family dynamics, the domino effects of violence and our personal stories — real or invented — that help us maneuver through life. The strong tension that launches "Never Look Back" only intensifies with each surpris-



This cover image released by William Morrow shows "Never Look Back," by Alison Gaylin.

Associated Press

ing twist.

Violence destroyed Garrison's family and he inherited the aftermath. His moth-

er's youngest sister was only 4 when she was killed in a shootout by teenagers Gabriel LeRoy and April Cooper, nicknamed the Inland Empire Killers who ended up murdering 12 people in Southern California in 1976. His grandfather, devastated by his little girl's murder that led to his wife's suicide, neglected his surviving child.

A drug addict all her life, Kate became the kind of parent she had — neglecting Quentin, destroying his self-confidence and crushing his sense of identity. He's afraid to ever show his true self to his husband, Dean, or his life-long best friend and co-producer, Summer.

Quentin uses "Closure" for

his own sense of closure by first trying to interview his grandfather, whose bitterness still simmers.

The two have a fight. Quentin finds another angle for his podcast when a source calls to say he believes a woman named Renee Bloom is really April, who was presumed killed in a fire along with Gabriel.

The source says he recognized April's voice and mannerisms when he saw Renee doing a televised discussion with her daughter, online film columnist Robin Diamond. Although skeptical, Quentin still flies to the New York area to find the truth, igniting another chain of violence.

The solid plot of "Never Look Back" also works well

as a character study as Gaylin intelligently delves into each person's psyche. Robin, wrapped up in her fraying marriage and online haters who object to her column, begins to wonder just how well she knows her mother, who never talked about her past.

The idea that this well-liked suburban matron who was a loving mother could be a killer living incognito seems preposterous to Robin, the fodder of B movies. And yet, the more Robin begins to consider this, the more she wonders about her mother.

Quentin is clinically depressed, obsessive and possibly violent, but Gaylin's realistic shaping makes the reader also feel for him. □

In 'Stuber,' a buddy comedy runs on fumes

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

If you're going to see one comedy starring Kumail Nanjiani as an Uber driver, please make it the 2017 film he co-scripted, "The Big Sick." In "Stuber," Nanjiani is again behind the wheel of a compact ride-sharing vehicle, but this time, the comedy is running on fumes and the company (Zoe Kazan in "The Big Sick," Dave Bautista in "Stuber") isn't nearly as good.

Stu is nicknamed "Stuber" by his obnoxious boss at a sporting goods store in a nod to his side gig. He's conscripted by Bautista's Vic, a Los Angeles police detective temporarily blinded by LASIK surgery, to drive him around town. Vic can hardly see, but he's hell-bent on pursuing the most lethally acrobatic drug dealer you've ever seen (Iko Uwais of "The



This image released by 20th Century Fox shows Dave Bautista, left, and Kumail Nanjiani in a scene from "Stuber."

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WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THU 4:10 | 6:20 | 8:30
FRI 4:10 | 6:20 | 8:30 | 10:40
SAT 1:50 | 4:10 | 6:20 | 8:30 | 10:40
SUN 1:50 | 4:10 | 6:20 | 8:30

CRAWL
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THU & SUN 2:55 | 5:05 | 7:15 | 9:25
FRI-SAT 2:55 | 5:05 | 7:15 | 9:25 | 11:35
KAYA SCODELARIO | BARRY PEPPER

SPIDER-MAN: Far From Home
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-FRI 5:50 | 8:40
SAT-SUN 3:00 | 5:50 | 8:40
MON-THU 5:00 | 7:50
FRI 5:00 | 7:50 | 10:40
SAT 2:10 | 5:00 | 7:50 | 10:40
SUN 2:10 | 5:00 | 7:50

CXC
MON-THU & SUN 2:00 | 4:45 | 7:30
FRI-SAT 2:00 | 4:45 | 7:30 | 10:15
PBP MON-SUN 12:55 | 3:40 | 6:25 | 9:10
MON-SUN 1:30 | 4:15

TOY STORY 4
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THU 4:00 | 6:25 | 8:50
FRI 4:00 | 6:25 | 8:50 | 11:15
SAT 1:40 | 4:00 | 6:25 | 8:50 | 11:15
SUN 1:40 | 4:00 | 6:25 | 8:50

ANNABELLE COMES HOME
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES R
MON-THU & SUN 7:50
FRI-SAT 7:50 | 10:00
PBP MON-THU & SUN 2:05 | 4:30 | 6:55 | 9:20
FRI-SAT 2:05 | 4:30 | 6:55 | 9:20 | 11:45

MIB INTERNATIONAL
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13
MON-SUN 7:00 | 9:30

YESTERDAY
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13
MON-FRI 5:15
SAT-SUN 2:40 | 5:15

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Raid") who months ago killed Vic's partner.

Stu, desperate for a five-star rating, is reluctantly sucked into a "Beverly Hills Cop"-like buddy action comedy that quickly turns violent and a little shrill. Nanjiani and Bautista, the hulking former wrestler best known as Drax in the "Guardians of the Galaxy" films, make a suitably odd pair. Stu is sensitive and nerdy, and desperate for his best friend (Betty Gilpin) to take him seriously as a romantic partner. Vic is gruff and bumbling and often appears almost literally as a bull in a china shop. Tripper Clancy's script — a

kind of comic version of Michael Mann's "Collateral," with Tom Cruise as a contract killer and Jamie Foxx as his cabbie — crafts a hardly novel running dialogue of masculinity. Occasionally, it hits just right, like when Nanjiani summarizes their dynamic: "You're built for justice. I'm built for brunch." But most of the time, it flails around in a stale routine. During a fight at the sporting goods store, Stu exclaims: "Real men cry!" The movie's premise is one long Uber ad, but it's a clever enough buddy comedy setup, and both Nanjiani and Bautista are

Associated Press

good comic performers. So what's missing here? Part of the trouble is that Bautista is playing too much to type (the twist on his brilliant Drax is that he's lovably emotional), and few actors benefit from having their eyes taken from them. That leaves most of the comedy to Nanjiani, and he does an admirable job trying to give the material a lift. But director Michael Dowse ("Goon") struggles to find the right tone, leaning more into slapdash action scenes than jokes. Any chance of sustained chemistry between the two leads recedes in the rear-view mirror. □

Gimmie, gimmie more BANKS, an artist on the rise

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

BANKS, "III" (Harvest Records)

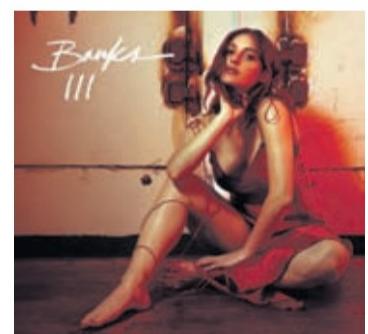
You could call BANKS' first single in a few years steamy — but you'd be off-base. "Gimme" is absolutely erotic, an explicit, hyper-racy club song — maybe a sex club song? — that announces the return of an artist in complete control. "I been dripping for your love," she sings. "Driving me crazy with the way you whine."

It's the highlight of the appropriately titled "III,"

BANKS' third album and one that jackhammers into the dark, murky pop vein that other young women like Tove Lo, Meg Myers and Lorde also mine.

Born Jillian Banks, BANKS released her debut album, "Goddess," in 2014, with her follow-up LP, "The Altar," arriving in 2016. Her songs have been featured in the HBO series "Girls" and fueled the opening act for The Weeknd.

"III" finds BANKS co-writing every track and collaborating with some high-level producers, including



This cover image released by Harvest Records shows "III", the latest release by BANKS.

Associated Press

Buddy Ross (Frank Ocean) and BJ Burton (Bon Iver, Lizzo). It's got highs but also lows, particularly when the production elements overwhelm BANKS' warm and hypnotic vocals. □

Rip Torn of 'Larry Sanders Show,' 'Men in Black,' dies at 88

By BOB THOMAS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Rip Torn, the free-spirited Texan who overcame his quirky name to become a distinguished actor in television, theater, and movies, such as "Men in Black," and win an Emmy in his 60s for "The Larry Sanders Show," has died. He was 88.

Torn died Tuesday afternoon at his home with his wife, Amy Wright, and daughters Katie Torn and Angelica Page by his side, according to his publicist Rick Miramontez. No cause of death was given.

His work on stage and screen spanned seven decades, ranging from an early career of dark, threatening roles to iconic comedic performances later in life.

After acclaimed performances in "Cross Creek," "Sweet Bird of Youth" and other dramas, Torn turned to comedy to capture his Emmy as the bombastic, ethically challenged television producer in "The Larry Sanders Show."

Created by and starring Garry Shandling, HBO's spoof of TV talk shows aired from 1992 to 1998 and is widely credited with inspiring such satirical programs as "30 Rock" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm."

Torn played Agent Zed in the first two "Men in Black," movies, which starred Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith.

Born Elmore Rual Torn, the actor adopted the name Rip in his boyhood, following the tradition of his father and uncle. It was the subject of endless ridicule during his early days as a stage actor in New York, and fellow drama students urged him to change it.

With customary stubbornness, he refused, eventually overcoming the jokes with a series of powerful performances that led to his being regarded, along with Marlon Brando, Paul Newman and James Dean, as actors of a postwar generation who brought tense realism to their craft. He was also a political activist who joined James Baldwin,



In this Jan. 15, 1995, file photo, actor Rip Torn gives a thumbs-up to photographers after winning for Best Actor in a Comedy Series for HBO's "The Larry Sanders Show," at the 16th annual CableACE Awards ceremony, in Los Angeles.

Harry Belafonte and other cultural and civil rights leaders for a frank and emotional 1963 meeting with then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy about the country's treatment of blacks.

Torn made his film debut in 1956 in an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' "Baby Doll," and within a few years was a respected film and television actor, working on occasions with his second wife, Geraldine Page. At the Actors Studio, he gained the attention of Elia Kazan, who hired him as understudy to Alex Nicol, then playing Brick Pollitt in the Tennessee Williams classic, "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof."

Toward the end of the show's Broadway run, Torn took over the role of the alcoholic, emotionally troubled former football hero.

He did so billed against his wishes as Elmore Torn.

Cast later in a "U.S. Steel Hour" production for television, he was told to either change his name or forfeit the role. He threatened to return to his native Texas but finally agreed to be credited as Eric Torn. He was billed as Rip Torn thereafter. His success eventually inspired a younger cousin to take up acting, too — Oscar winner Sissy Spacek. Other film credits included "Critics Choice" and "The Cincinnati Kid." In Albert Brooks' "Defending Your Life," he was featured as a gregarious attorney in the afterlife.

Brooks tweeted Tuesday night, "R.I.P. Rip Torn. He was so great in Defending Your Life. I'll miss you Rip, you were a true original." On television he played such figures as Richard Nix-

on, Lyndon B. Johnson and Walt Whitman.

His career hit a dry spell in the 1970s, and he blamed it on the buzz in Hollywood at the time that he was difficult to work with, a reputation sealed when tension on the set of "Easy Rider" led to his being replaced by Jack Nicholson for the 1969 release and missing out on one of the biggest hits of the era.

"I wouldn't say that I was blacklisted," he told The Associated Press in 1984, "but the word got around that I was difficult and unreliable. Unreliable! In all my years in the theater I have never missed a performance."

He managed to keep working in small projects in theater, films and TV, returning to the mainstream in 1983 with "Cross Creek," in which he played table-smashing backwoodsman Marsh

Turner. The role brought him his only Oscar nomination, for best supporting actor. He also appeared in 1984's "City Heat."

But he never entirely shook his rebellious reputation.

"What do they say about all the guys that are tremendous actors?" he told The New York Times in 2006. "Don't they say they have a volatile temper and emotions? Yeah, sure they do! They're not saying they like a nice, mild guy. Look at Sean Penn."

In 1994, actor-director Dennis Hopper said on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" that Torn once pulled a knife in a New York restaurant as he complained about being replaced in "Easy Rider." He sued Hopper for slander and won a \$475,000 judgment.

He remained active in film and television in later years, including a recurring role in "30 Rock" and a voice acting gig in the 2007 animated "Bee Movie."

He weathered a couple of drunken driving arrests, including one in December 2008 near his home in Salisbury, Connecticut, that led to his placement in an alcohol education program.

Born in Temple, Texas, Torn initially studied agriculture at Texas A&M and acting at the University of Texas.

After service as a military policeman during the Korean War, he hitchhiked to Hollywood. Landing only tiny roles in movies and TV dramas, and supporting himself as a fry cook and dishwasher, he decided to shift to New York and seek more training as an actor.

Torn and his first wife, actress Ann Wedgeworth, had a daughter, Danae, before divorcing.

In 1963 he married Page, with whom he had co-starred in the touring production and movie version of "Sweet Bird of Youth."

They had three children, a daughter, Angelica, and twins Jon and Tony, and appeared in productions together until her death in 1987.

Torn also had two children, Katie and Claire, with actress Amy Wright. □

Associated Press

Gaza's traditional crafts industries rapidly disappearing

By FARES AKRAM

KHALIL HAMRA

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)

— When Gazans think of better economic times, images of clay pottery, colorful glassware, bamboo furniture and ancient frame looms weaving bright rugs and mats all come to mind. For decades, these traditional crafts defined the economy of the coastal Palestinian enclave, employing thousands of people and exporting across the region. Today, the industries are almost non-existent.

While such professions have shrunk worldwide in the face of globalization and Chinese mass production, Gazan business owners say Israel's 12-year blockade of the territory has accelerated the trend.

"We have been economically damaged. We are staying, but things are really difficult," said Abed Abu Sido, one of Gaza's last glassmakers, as he flipped through a glossy catalog of his products.

At his quiet workshop, layers of dust covered the few remaining glass artifacts, requiring him to scrub them to reveal their colors. Cardboard boxes of unfinished products and materials were stacked floor-to-ceiling.

Abu Sido opened his business in the 1980s, selling many of his items to vendors in the popular marketplace of Jerusalem's Old City. In his heyday, he said he took part in exhibitions in Europe.

That changed after 2007, when the Hamas militant group overran Gaza, and Israel and Egypt responded by sealing Gaza's borders.



In this Saturday, July 6, 2019 photo, a Palestinian works at a bamboo workshop in Gaza City.

Associated Press



In this Saturday, July 6, 2019 photo, a Palestinian works at a pottery workshop in Gaza City.

Associated Press

Abu Sido laid off his 15 workers and ceased operations the following year. Israel says the blockade is needed to contain Hamas and prevent it from arming. But the closure, repeated rounds of fighting with Israel and a power struggle with the rival Palestinian Authority in the West Bank have hit Gaza hard.

Under the blockade, Israel has greatly restricted exports and limited imports of raw materials. With unemployment over 50%, demand from the local market is weak. Israel blames the situation on Hamas, an armed group that opposes Israel's existence.

COGAT, the Israeli defense body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs, said exports from Gaza now frequently make their way into Israel, the West Bank and beyond, and that it has worked in recent months to promote even more exports to help develop Gaza's economy.

"In this framework, pilot programs have been launched for producing wet wipes, aluminum goods, iron doors, toys, wooden boards and more," it said. Agricultural products, furniture and textiles are now regularly exported from Gaza through a cargo crossing with Israel, it added.

COGAT said it now has the capacity to ship 100 truck-loads of goods through its Kerem Shalom crossing, but that the Gazans are only utilizing about one third of that. Business owners say that after so many years of being unable to export, it is

difficult to resume operations. Many have lost their former business partners.

Not far from Abu Sido's workshop is Khalaf's Carpentry, known for making prized cane and bamboo furniture. Its living room sets, recliners, dining tables and chairs were once shipped to markets in the West Bank, Israel, Persian Gulf and America. The business flourished from 1975 until the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000. Things worsened after the blockade, and owner Tareq Khalaf said he began laying off his 30 full-time workers. Now he has

just five part-timers.

Though Israel has lifted the ban on some furniture exports, Khalaf said his clients moved to other suppliers long ago. Hamas taxes on raw materials have added another obstacle.

"This is a traditional Palestinian profession. The official authorities should make it a priority," he said. "They have to support this industry."

Thousands of unsold clay bowls, pots, vases and jugs sit in the yard of the Atallah pottery workshop. On a recent day, three employees shaped clay on the wheel, while two others mixed mud. Khairi Atallah, the pottery maker, said this is all that remains of the 50 workers he once employed.

"The income is no longer enough to get by," he said. He said he keeps operating because his father doesn't want the generations-old business to close during his lifetime.

Mahmoud Sawaf, 73, believes he is the last weaver in Gaza. With the territory closed to tourists, international aid workers are the only people keeping him afloat. Cheaper straw mats have flooded Gaza, and local residents can't afford his handmade carpets. But the foreigners still buy them. "Even at this age I continue to work," he said. "I will not give up and quit." □



In this Saturday, July 6, 2019 photo, Palestinian Mahmoud al-Sawwaf, the owner of a traditional carpets factory, displays his products in Gaza City.

Associated Press